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NUT, THE ZODIAC, AND SOTHIS: AN ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF FIVE
COFFIN LIDS FROM THE ROMAN PERIOD SOTER GROUP

by

Elizabeth Anne Golden

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Major: Art History

The University of Memphis

May 2014

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ABSTRACT

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The Greek zodiac became known to Egypt during the Graeco-Roman period and can be seen primarily in temples. This imagery is not limited to temples, however, and can be seen on five coffin lids from the Soter group along with related figures of Nut and Sothis. The function of zodiac figures was to represent the passage of time. In this study, I will identify the Osirian and solar roles of the sky goddess Nut on the interior of coffins. I will then discuss the coffin lids as a form of archaizing of Middle Kingdom star charts on coffin lids and explain how figures of the zodiac replaced the Egyptian decans. Finally, I will analyze the relationship between Nut, the zodiac, and Sothis on the coffin lids and explain how, together, they represent the passage of time and bring about yearly renewal of the deceased on the five coffins in the Soter group.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The “Soter group” designates a set of Romano-Egyptian coffins and other funerary objects belonging to the Soter family, who lived in the first century AD.¹ The family tomb, the reused Theban Tomb 32 (TT 32), was discovered in 1820 in the presence of Antonio Lebolo, an Italian antiquities collector who often worked with the then French consul to Egypt, Bernardino Drovetti, and the English traveler, Frederick Henniker.² An account of the find was recorded in Henniker’s book, *Notes During a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem* (1823).³ Notes about the objects were recorded in *Lezioni archaeologiche intorno ad alcuni monumenti del regio museo egiziano di Torino* (1824), by Giulio di San Quintino, keeper at the Museo Egizio in Turin.⁴ The notes were based on descriptions provided by Lebolo. Objects from the burial were distributed to several museums in Europe soon after the discovery.⁵ There were fourteen coffins in the group. The interior of the lid from five of the coffins in this group is decorated with a figure of Nut flanked by figures of the Greek zodiac, in an

¹ Susan Walker and Morris Bierbrier, *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 149.

² K. van Landuyt, “The Soter Family: Genealogy and Onomastics,” in *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. S.P. Vleeming (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 69; François René Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter: histoire d’une famille dans l’Égypte romaine* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2002), 6.

³ Frederick Henniker, *Notes During a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem* (London: John Murray, 1823), 136-137.

⁴ Giulio dei Conti Cordero di San Quintino, *Lezioni archaeologiche intorno ad alcuni monumenti del regio museo egiziano di Torino* (Turin, 1824), from Lászlo Kákosy, “The Soter Tomb in Thebes,” in *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. S.P. Vleeming (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 64.

⁵ Kákosy, “Soter Tomb in Thebes,” 63.

arrangement unparalleled on Egyptian coffins. The motifs of this unique grouping borrow from Egyptian Osirian and solar iconography, as well as ancient Greek astronomy.

The corpus of this study consists of five coffins from the Soter group: the coffins of Soter (London, British Museum, EA 6705),⁶ Kleopatra (London, British Museum, EA 6706),⁷ Petamenophis (Paris, Musée du Louvre, E 13048),⁸ Kornelios Pollios (London, British Museum, EA 6950),⁹ and Sensaos (Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, AAM 8-c).¹⁰ Two related coffins, which are also decorated with figures of the Greek zodiac, will also be mentioned: the coffin of Heter (known possession by Maunier at Luxor in 1857; current location unknown)¹¹ and the coffin of Senpeteuris (current location unknown). I have chosen to include these related coffins because they are the only known examples of coffins outside the Soter group which contain figures of the zodiac according to Neugebauer and Parker's corpus in *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*.¹² Due to the fact that the coffins are located in European museums, I have conducted the research

⁶ "Lid of the coffin of Soter," The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/coffin_of_cleopatra.aspx.

⁷ "Coffin of Cleopatra," The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/coffin_of_cleopatra.aspx.

⁸ Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*, 52.

⁹ Christina Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity, and Funerary Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 282.

¹⁰ "Post Sarcophagus; Sensaos." Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.rmo.nl/collectie/zoeken?object=AMM+8-c>.

¹¹ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Painting*, vol. 1, *The Theban Necropolis, part 2, Royal Tombs and Smaller Cemeteries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 647.

¹² O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, *Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), 204-205.

for this study from publications and online museum catalog entries, and was thus restricted in my descriptive and iconographic discussions from not having physical access to the coffins.

Initial research was conducted on the coffins by Otto Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker and included in *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* (1969), a corpus of astronomical texts from coffins, tombs, and temples.¹³ Interest in the coffin group expanded in the early 1980s when the Hungarian expedition, led by László Kákósy, began excavations at the tomb of Djehutymes, TT32, and later confirmed the previously unknown location of the Soter burials as this tomb.¹⁴ This research was discussed in Kákósy's article, "The Soter Tomb in Thebes" in *Hundred-Gated Thebes* (1995), along with an article by K. van Landuyt about the genealogy and onomastics of the Soter family.¹⁵

Recent examination has been conducted by François René Herbin, researcher for the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS), for a publication about the Musée du Louvre coffin and artifacts belonging to Petamenophis, son of Soter.¹⁶ Extensive research and iconographic analyses were conducted by Christina Riggs, whose contributions include discussions about archaizing elements present on the exterior of the Soter group coffins, figures of the sky-goddess Nut on the bottom of the

¹³ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, 204-205.

¹⁴ László Kákósy, "Magical Bricks from TT 32," in *Funerary Symbols and Religion: Essays Dedicated to Professor M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss*, ed. J.H. Kamstra, et al. (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1988), 60; Kákósy, "Soter Tomb in Thebes," 64-65.

¹⁵ Kákósy, "Soter Tomb in Thebes," 64-65; van Landuyt, "Soter Family."

¹⁶ Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*.

coffins, and general burial practices of Roman Egypt.¹⁷ Although the Soter group has been the subject of much research since the 1980s, a thorough analysis of the zodiac figures has not been conducted. In this study, I aim to contribute to the existing scholarship about the Soter group with a discussion of the figures of the zodiac and their relationship with the figure of Nut on the interior of the coffin lids.

Each of the coffin lids shares a similar iconographic arrangement. The central figure is Nut. She serves many religious functions inside the coffin, including her role as the night sky who gives birth to the sun each morning and as the protector of the deceased.¹⁸ In addition to the figure of Nut, the coffins of the Soter group incorporate motifs from Egyptian solar mythology such as figures of the personified hours, the scarab representing the god Khepri, solar barques, baboons, and solar disks. The coffins also include a figure of a recumbent cow, who has been identified as the goddess Sothis,¹⁹ the personification of the star Sirius and a key figure in the passage of time and the renewal of the Egyptian calendar.

The passage of time was an important concept in ancient Egypt, and was incorporated into Egyptian thought throughout Egypt's ancient history. The passage of time was marked by hours, days, months, seasons, and years in a repeated cycle of renewal and rebirth. The ancient Egyptians recorded the passage of time based on the apparent movement of stars across the sky as early as the First Intermediate Period and

¹⁷ Christina Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources in Roman Egypt: The Coffins of the Soter Family and the Temple of Deir el-Medina," *Bulletin de L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 106 (2006): 315-332; Christina Riggs, "The Egyptian Funerary Tradition at Thebes in the Roman Period," in *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Nigel Strudwick and John H. Taylor (London: British Museum Press, 2003), 189-201; Christina Riggs, *Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*.

¹⁸ See Chapter Four for more information about Nut.

¹⁹ Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources," 327.

Middle Kingdom.²⁰ In order to understand the presence of the zodiac figures inside the Soter group coffins, I will examine First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom star charts from the inside of rectangular-shaped coffins. Early star charts painted on the interior of coffin lids and New Kingdom Ramesside tomb decoration recorded the passage of time based on the rise of decans, or constellations of stars, in the night sky over a period of one year.²¹

In this study, I will begin by discussing Nut and other Egyptian iconographic motifs and then explore the roles of Nut and her relationship with the figures of the zodiac. Following this discussion, I will examine the figures of the zodiac present on the coffin and how they recall popular motifs from Egyptian iconography and argue that the coffins of the Soter group that include the figures of the zodiac may be a form of archaizing that drew influence from First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom star charts found on coffins and tomb walls.

Finally, I will argue that the figures of Nut, the Greek zodiac, and recumbent cow as the goddess Sothis work, as a group, not only to mark the passage of time but also to bring about the yearly renewal of the deceased in the afterlife. The coffin was thought of as a transformative space for the deceased. The ancient Egyptians believed that many transformations took place within the coffin after burial: the transformation of the

²⁰ Richard A. Parker, "Ancient Egyptian Astronomy," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, series A, *Mathematical and Physical Sciences* 276, no. 1257 (1974), 53.

²¹ Juan Antonio Belmonte, "The Ramesside Star Clocks and the Ancient Egyptian Constellations," in *Calendars, Symbols, and Orientations: Legacies of Astronomy in Culture. Proceedings of the 9th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Astronomy in Culture (SEAC)*, ed. Mary Bloomberg, et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2003), 58.

deceased into an Osiris,²² the uniting of the deceased with the sun god,²³ and the transformation of the deceased into a star in the night sky.²⁴ The figures of the Greek zodiac and Sothis in the Soter group directly relate to the transformation of the deceased into a star and are thus appropriate elements to include inside the coffin lids. Their relationship with Nut becomes clear, as Nut was the personification of the night sky and mother of Sothis, who gave birth to her annually to mark the beginning of each new year on the Egyptian calendar.²⁵

²² John H. Taylor and Nigel Strudwick, *Mummies: Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (Santa Ana: Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, 2005), 24.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ R. O. Faulkner, "The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25 (1966): 153-161.

²⁵ See Chapter Six for a discussion of Sothis as the daughter of Nut.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THEBAN TOMB 32 AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOTER GROUP

The Soter group burial was discovered in El-Khokha at Qurna in 1820.¹ The tomb itself (TT 32) was constructed during the reign of Ramses II, originally for a man named Djehutymes.² The find was attributed to Antonio Lebolo and Frederick Henniker. Henniker recorded the find in his 1823 book, *Notes During a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem* and included a Greek inscription copied from the burial equipment of Soter.³ Fourteen coffins and mummies were discovered, along with mummy shrouds, masks, and papyri.⁴ Many of the objects, including the Soter group coffins, were taken back to Europe with Lebolo and sold to museums, including the British Museum, Musée du Louvre, Museo Egizio in Turin, and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, where they remain today.⁵

Although the Soter group is now definitively associated with TT 32, the connection was not always certain because neither the location of the tomb nor the name of the original tomb owner was provided in Henniker's account.⁶ Nevertheless, László Kákosy, director of the Hungarian expedition at the tomb of Djehutymes (TT32), has

¹ Kákosy, "Soter Tomb in Thebes," 63.

² Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*, 6.

³ Henniker, *Notes*, 136-137.

⁴ For a list of coffins from the Soter group, see Porter and Moss, vol. 1, part 2, 674-676. For a list of additional items from the tomb, see Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*, 52-53.

⁵ Riggs, "Egyptian Funerary Tradition," 193.

⁶ Henniker, *Notes*, 136-137.

identified evidence that connects this tomb with Lebolo. The first is a grafitto of Lebolo's name on the corridor of the tomb, although this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the Soter group was found there.⁷ The second and most important connection is that, in a description of Lebolo's find, he mentions a brick wall in the location of the burial of Petamenophis, a member of the Soter family. The mummy of Petamenophis, together with a set of bricks stamped with the name of Djehutymes, is now in the collection of the Museo Egizio, in Turin, and these antiquities are likely from the same location, Theban Tomb 32, thus connecting Lebolo's description with these objects.⁸

Theban Tomb 32 was originally constructed for Djehutymes during the reign of Ramses II in Dynasty 19 (1279-1213 BC).⁹ It was built as a "temple-tomb" of the rock-cut type.¹⁰ The walls of the tomb were decorated with painted reliefs in preparation for the afterlife.¹¹ Soon after the Ramesside burial of Djehutymes, the tomb was looted and later reused several times throughout the Late Period until the Roman period.¹² The Soter group is dated as a Roman period burial based on Greek inscriptions on the burial

⁷ László Kákósy, et al., *The Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes (TT 32)* (Budapest: Archaeolingua Alapítvány, 2004), 337.

⁸ Kákósy, "Soter Tomb in Thebes," 64-65; László Kákósy and Gábor Schreiber, "Use and Re-use. An Overview of the Post-Ramesside Burials in TT 32," in *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück: Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Nicole Kloth et al. (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2003), 208.

⁹ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Painting*, vol. 1, *The Theban Necropolis*, part 1, *Private Tombs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 49-50.

¹⁰ Kákósy, et al., *Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes (TT 32)*, 10. This source also contains a description of the architectural elements of the tomb.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*, 7.

materials of Sensaos (AD 93-109) and Petamenophis (AD 95-116) that date their deaths as occurring during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan.¹³ Other coffins of the group not discussed in this study are dated to the reign of Hadrian.¹⁴ The Soter group consisted of at least fourteen individual members. The head of the family was a man named Soter, who served as the *archon*, or local official, of Thebes during the first century AD.¹⁵ He was the son of a man named Kornelios Pollios and a woman named *P3y-mwt*.¹⁶ Soter was married to a woman named Kleopatra, and together they had at least seven children: Petamenophis, called Ammonios, Apollomides, Hathor Kleopatra, Petronius, Hathor Sensaos, Tkauthi, and Sensaos. Of these children, the coffins of Petamenophis, Kleopatra, and Sensaos will be discussed in this study.¹⁷

¹³ van Landuyt, "Soter Family," 75.

¹⁴ Ibid., 76-66.

¹⁵ Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources," 316.

¹⁶ van Landuyt, "Soter Family," 71-72.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the genealogy of the Soter group, see van Landuyt, "Soter Family."

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOTER GROUP COFFIN LIDS

The coffins in the Soter group that form the corpus of this thesis, Figures 1-5, are rectangular in shape and each has a vaulted lid. Along the top edge of the rectangular trough of each coffin is an added piece of wood made to resemble a cavetto cornice. The lid is shaped into a type of barrel vault, with four wooden posts in each corner. The outer decoration of the coffins focuses on Egyptian themes of the afterlife, as seen in Figure 6.¹

Of the fourteen coffins found in the tomb, five are decorated on the interior of the coffin lid with a full-bodied figure of the goddess Nut surrounded by the twelve Greek zodiac symbols.² Although the scene on each coffin varies, specific figures– Nut, the symbols of the zodiac, and the personified hours of day and night– and their arrangement are consistent throughout. The figure of Nut appears as the goddess who spans the sky, with upraised arms and pointed feet.³ She wears sandals and a beaded net dress that extends to her ankles. Some versions of the dress include straps over the breasts and shoulders, while others leave the breasts exposed. On each coffin, Nut wears jewelry on her neck, wrists, and arms and a round wig and headband on her head. Symbols of the zodiac are depicted in the space under each of Nut's extended arms and are organized symmetrically down the two sides of the coffin lid. While Nut's orientation on the coffin lid is lengthwise, the zodiac symbols are oriented perpendicular to the figure of Nut, with

¹ “Coffin of Tpaesus,” The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/coffin_of_tpaesus.aspx.

² See Chapter Five for a discussion of the zodiac figures.

³ See Chapter Four for more information about Nut.

each of the figures facing toward the outer edges. Each coffin includes additional figures in the spaces between Nut's head and arms, whether it be solar and lunar barques or depictions of turtles. The interior walls of the lids feature depictions of the personified hours as female figures.

The decoration on the interior of the coffin lids merges traditional Egyptian themes of funerary solar iconography with the Greek zodiac. Nevertheless, the rendering of figures primarily stays true to the Egyptian canonical style.⁴ Figures are outlined in dark, thick paint and then painted in brightly colored pigments. Although the figure of Nut is fully frontal (except for the hands and feet), the human and animal figures of the zodiac and the stars are depicted in the traditional Egyptian aspective manner, emphasizing the most easily recognizable element of each figure.⁵ What follows is a description of the interior of each coffin lid.

The Coffin of Soter

The coffin of Soter (British Museum, EA 6705) is one of the best preserved in the Soter group, shown in Figure 1. Although there is some paint loss on the interior of the coffin lid, the majority of the original paint is still extant, making each figure easily identifiable. Nut, the sky goddess, is the central figure. She wears a bead net dress that leaves her breasts exposed. The fabric of the dress is painted with a deep red pigment, with white and green for the crossed pieces of the beading. On her head is a black wig

⁴ For a discussion about the Egyptian canonical style, see Whitney Davis, *The Canonical Tradition in Ancient Egyptian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁵ For a discussion on the aspective view of Egyptian art, see Emma Brunner-Traut, "Epilogue: Aspective," in *Principles of Egyptian Art*, by Heinrich Schäfer, (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1986), more recently discussed in Davis, *Canonical Tradition*, 51.

and headband tied on either side. The figure of Nut wears earrings, a beaded necklace, armbands, and wristbands. Nut wears a *nw*-pot headdress, painted in green. Although the *nw*-pot headdress is a common element in depictions of Nut and the first hieroglyphic sign of her name,⁶ the coffin of Soter is the only coffin in the group that depicts this headdress. The facial features on this depiction of Nut are bold, with thick lines for the eyes, nose, and mouth. The eyes are large and almond-shaped, while the ears, nose, and mouth are proportionally much smaller in comparison.

The zodiac appears on either side of Nut, and the order is counterclockwise from top to bottom as follows: Leo in the proper right column, followed by Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Capricorn; then Aquarius at the bottom of the proper left, followed by Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer. Between the spaces of the zodiac figures are white stars with red centers.

The space between Nut's head and arms contains two sacred barks, which are likely the solar bark (*m^cndt*-bark) and the lunar bark (*msktt*-bark).⁷ The negative space is decorated with stars and rosettes. Between Nut's feet is a depiction of a scarab, the god Khepri, the form of the sun who is reborn from Nut's body each morning. To either side of Nut's feet is a baboon, greeting the morning sun. The interior of the lunette at the foot end of the coffin is decorated with a winged sun disk and a recumbent cow on top of a shrine. The lunette at the head end is decorated with a solar disc emanating brightly

⁶ Dieter Kurth. "Nut," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), 536.

⁷ Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 568, 570; Dilwyn Jones, *Boats* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 14.

colored rays of light. The side walls of the coffin are lined with figures of the hours of the day and night, personified as twenty-four female figures.⁸

The Coffin of Kleopatra

On the coffin of Kleopatra (British Museum, EA 6706), daughter of Soter, a figure of Nut is again the central figure, as seen in Figure 2. Her beaded dress resembles the one worn by Nut on the coffin of Soter, with a red, green, and white beaded net design. However, the dress shown here includes decorative straps that cover the breasts. The straps are decorated with chevrons and rosettes acting as breast covers. On the inside of the chevron and rosette parts of the strap are pieces of blue-green fabric with curved stripes, and on the outer edge of the straps are yellow pieces with an abstract design in black and red. The figure of Nut also wears a beaded necklace, together with armbands and bracelets that match the appearance of her dress straps. The wig on her head is painted with a brown pigment and stepped to simulate curls, and her headband is tied on both sides, similar to that depicted on the Soter coffin. However, here the figure of Nut does not wear the *nw*-pot headdress, but bears a solar disc similar to the one on the upper lunette of Soter's coffin. The solar disk is repeated on each other coffin in this group over the figure of Nut's head. The negative space between her arms and head contains turtles outlined in black with cross-hatched shells, instead of the solar and lunar barks featured on Soter's coffin. Turtles are also depicted on the coffins of Petamenophis, Kornelios Pollios, and Sensaos. Turtles were not common in Egyptian funerary art, but they were known to have been depicted as harmful opponents of Re, being speared in scenes from

⁸ Walker and Bierbrier, *Ancient Faces*, 150.

the Nineteenth Dynasty and in Graeco-Roman temples.⁹ Due to the placement of these turtles among solar iconography, it does not seem likely that they represent enemies of Re who were capable of harming the deceased. On the other hand, from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period, turtles were represented as the twin-turtle constellation on coffins.¹⁰ Although there are four turtles represented on this coffin and others in the group, it is possible that the idea derived from earlier representations of this constellation. A single figure of a turtle is also depicted on a wall in the Axial Hall of the tomb of Djehutymes (TT 32);¹¹ it appears, however, in a fishing scene and it is more likely that the turtles depicted on the coffin lids relate to the twin-turtle constellation, due to the overall astronomical theme of the coffin lids.

The space below each of the figure of Nut's arms is filled with zodiac signs. They appear clockwise, from top to bottom on the proper left, with Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Capricorn, and then from bottom to top along the proper right side of Nut's body with Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer. The space behind the zodiac figures is painted with a now faded blue pigment, decorated with yellow stars in between the figures.

The side walls of the coffin lid are also decorated with figures of the twenty-four personified hours represented in an identical manner to the figures on the Soter coffin. The motif in the lunette at the foot of the coffin is nearly identical, with a winged sun disk and recumbent cow resting on a shrine. However, the coffin of Kleopatra depicts a

⁹ Henry G. Fischer, *Ancient Egyptian Representations of Turtles* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1968), 7, 9.

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹¹ Kákósy, et al., *Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes (TT 32)*, 265-266.

figure of a *ba*-bird in front of the cow as an added feature that does not appear on the Soter coffin. The decoration of the upper lunette varies greatly from the Soter coffin, depicting a figure of the god Sokar-Re with outstretched wings.¹² Another variation on the coffin of Kleopatra is the absence of the figure of Khepri, who is usually a key element in depictions of Nut in coffins and tomb paintings.¹³

The Coffin of Petamenophis

The coffin of Petamenophis (Musée du Louvre, E 13048), son of Soter, closely resembles the coffin of Kleopatra.¹⁴ The figure of Nut also features the same beaded net dress with similar straps over the breasts, earrings, stepped wig, armbands, bracelets, and beaded necklace, depicted in Figure 3. The wig and headband are also very similar to the ones on the coffin of Kleopatra. However, the collars worn by Nut vary from the collar depicted on the coffin of Soter. Here, Nut wears two collars with abstract rosette and teardrop-shaped designs. The figure of Nut is shown with the beaming sun disc above her head, as on the coffin lid of Kleopatra. Also, as she does on the coffin lid of Kleopatra, Nut appears without the figure of Khepri at her feet.

The space between Nut's head and arms is decorated with four turtles with human hands surrounded by yellow stars. However, this coffin features an additional figure in the top proper right: the zodiac symbol for Capricorn appears here rather than with the

¹² Cf. Lorelei H. Corcoran and Marie Svoboda, *Herakleides: A Roman Mummy Portrait from Roman Egypt* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 22, 27.

¹³ A figure of Khepri is often depicted with a figure of Nut on tomb walls decorated with Books of the Afterlife in which both characters appear, such as the Book of Nut on the cenotaph of Seti I (Figure 16) and ceiling of Ramesses IV (Figure 17) and the Book of Day on the ceiling of Ramesses VI (Figure 18). Jan Assmann, "Chepre," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 934.

¹⁴ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, 204.

other eleven signs. The reasoning for this is unclear, but perhaps it could be because of a lack of space under Nut's arms. The Capricorn sign was likely added to the top to keep the zodiac complete. The zodiac figures underneath Nut's arms are positioned clockwise, as on the coffin of Kleopatra, with Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius from top to bottom down the proper left side and Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer up the proper right. The negative space around the zodiac signs is densely packed with yellow stars to represent the night sky.

The Coffin of Kornelios Pollios

The coffin of Kornelios Pollios (British Museum, EA 6950), father of Soter, is preserved incomplete, but in large fragments.¹⁵ Figure 4 is of a large fragment which makes up the majority of the coffin lid. The vault of the lid is one of the fragments, and the figure of Nut is mostly intact. The clothing worn by Nut is similar to the dress and straps featured on the coffin of Kleopatra and of Petamenophis, although the paint on this coffin fragment is badly damaged and much of the color on the straps has faded. On this coffin, the figure of Nut appears with four turtles between her arms and head, and there is a sun disc emitting rays of light above her head. Although the zodiac symbols are badly damaged and some of the wooden boards that contain zodiac symbols are missing, it appears that the zodiac was positioned counterclockwise with Cancer near Nut's left foot, proceeding upward with Capricorn, Sagittarius, Scorpio, and Libra visible on the proper left, continuing to the figure of Aquarius on the proper right at the top. The remaining zodiac figures are positioned clockwise on the proper right and are poorly preserved, with only a trace of the symbol for Pisces near Nut's waistline and the figure of Gemini below

¹⁵ Ibid.

the hem of her dress, beside her right foot. Stars are preserved along the proper right side of Nut's body and scattered amongst the zodiac, as in each coffin previously described.

The Coffin of Sensaos

The coffin of Sensaos (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, AAM 8-c), daughter of Soter, is nearly identical to the coffin of Kleopatra. Much of the decoration remains the same, including the figure of Nut, her costume, jewelry, and wig, seen in Figure 5. The space between Nut's arms and above her head is decorated with four turtles and a rayed sun disc, and the zodiac symbols are positioned around Nut's body in a clockwise sequence, starting with Leo on the proper left and ending with Cancer on the proper right. The stars in between the zodiac figures are more densely packed, resembling the coffin of Petamenophis rather than the coffin of Kleopatra.

Two Related Coffins with Zodiac Iconography

There are two additional coffins with zodiac iconography listed in Neugebauer and Parker's *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*: the coffin of Heter, shown in Figure 7, and the coffin of Senpeteuris, in Figure 8.¹⁶ Although the coffin of Heter (current location unknown) was not discovered with the Soter group, it also comes from Deir el-Bahari, Thebes¹⁷ and bears striking similarities to the coffins of the Soter group, thus warranting a discussion. The coffin lid features a figure of Nut with a beaded net dress and straps, although her breasts are exposed and extended flat in profile. Above her head is a sun disc and rays of light, similar to those on four of the five coffins of the Soter examples.

¹⁶ Ibid., 204-205.

¹⁷ Porter and Rosalind Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 1, part 2, 647.

The figures of the zodiac appear both clockwise and counterclockwise on the coffin. The proper right figures are positioned counterclockwise, with Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius. The proper left figures are clockwise with Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, and Gemini. A unique feature on this coffin that does not appear on the Soter coffins is the presence of inscriptions in Demotic near some zodiac figures and a hieroglyphic text down the center of Nut's dress.

The inner sides of the coffin are decorated with a greater number of figures than the coffins of the Soter group. In addition to the twenty-four personified hours as female figures divided into two rows of twelve, there are registers on each side with astronomical figures. The astronomical figures closely resemble the figures on the Dynasty 18 astronomical ceiling from the tomb of Senenmut (Tomb 353) from Deir el-Bahari, as seen in Figure 9.¹⁸ On the proper right of the coffin of Heter, from top to bottom, the figures are: the crocodile-headed female hippopotamus, *rrt-wrt*; the *mshtyw* bull foreleg being speared by the falcon-headed man, *ꜥnw*; a reclining lion-headed crocodile named *rw-ntry-nty-imytw.snwy* above a crocodile called *h3kꜣw s3k*; a baboon; falcon; and the four sons of Horus, Imsety, Hapi, Duamutef, and Qebehsenuf.¹⁹ On the proper left, from top to bottom, the figures are the planet Jupiter depicted as a falcon-

¹⁸ See Peter F. Dorman, *The Tombs of Senenmut: The Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 138-147 for a discussion of the astronomical ceiling.

¹⁹ For more information about the astronomical figures present on the coffin of Heter, see Andrea Louise Middleton, "Representations of Time in the Temple of Hathor at Dendera: Iconographical Analyses of the Two Astronomical Ceilings in Terms of *Nḥḥ* and *ḏt*" (MA Thesis, University of Memphis, 2013), 39-40 and Luke W. Breinig, "Astronomy, Cosmology, and Religious Expression in the New Kingdom: A Study of Late Remesside Cosmological Funerary Scenes" (MA Thesis, University of Memphis, 2012), 26-27. A. Pogo, "The Astronomical Ceiling-Decoration in the Tomb of Senmut (XVIIIth Dynasty)," *Isis* 14, no. 2 (1930): 313 provides a discussion on the identification of astronomical figures from the tomb of Senenmut, some of which are paralleled on the coffin of Heter. See also Dorman, *Tombs of Senenmut*.

headed god in a bark, a falcon on a shrine, Mars as a human deity in a bark, Saturn as a bull-headed deity in a bark, Mercury as a human deity in a bark, and Venus as the Bennu, a heron figure.²⁰

The depictions between the arms and head of the figure of Nut combine elements seen on all of the examples from the Soter group. On the proper left of Nut's head, there are two barks, containing figures of Sothis²¹ and Orion. This resembles similar depictions of the two figures on the astronomical ceiling of Senenmut, where both figures are shown standing on a bark.²² To the proper right of Nut's head are two turtles and the crocodile-headed Devourer deity, *ꜥm*, featured in scenes of the Weighing of the Heart ceremony.²³

At each corner is a figure of the ram deity, Amun, in several forms, representing the Four Winds. On the top, proper right, the west wind, *ḥd3*, is depicted as a ram-headed bird with three sets of wings and a large feather and uraeus headdress.²⁴ On the bottom, proper right, is the four-headed north wind, *mḥtj kb*, with a lion's body and two sets of outstretched wings, wearing a double-plumed headdress with a sun disc and two uraei.²⁵ On the top, proper left, the south wind, *rsi šhb*, has a single ram's head on a lion's body,

²⁰ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol.3, 177-181; Middleton, "Representations of Time," 39.

²¹ László Kákosy, "Sothis," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), 1113.

²² Dorman, *Tombs of Senenmut*, 142-143.

²³ Christine Seeber, "Fresserin," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 328.

²⁴ Susanne Woodhouse, "The sun god, his four bas and the four winds in the sacred district at Saïs: the fragment of an obelisk (BM EA 1512)," in *The Ancient Temple in Ancient Egypt: New Discoveries and Recent Research*, ed. Stephen Quirke (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 136.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

with two sets of wings and a double-plumed crown.²⁶ A four-headed ram with a scarab's body and double-plumed crown is on the bottom proper left, representing the east wind, *hnw šss*.²⁷ The lunette on this coffin shows a solar bark with the seated figure of Re-Horakhty. Before him stands a figure of the “the Osiris” Heter in a pleated tunic.

The coffin of Senpeteuris (current location unknown) is a rectangular coffin, seen in Figure 8, which does not seem to follow the same formula for decoration as coffins of the Soter group and Heter. Although it is worth mentioning as the only other example of a coffin with depictions of the zodiac, it will not be discussed in detail because it does not follow the style of the Soter group coffins or the coffin of Heter. The zodiac appears on the outside of the coffin, and it is arranged as a counterclockwise circular zodiac around representations of two solar barks. The rest of the coffin employs Egyptian motifs rendered in the Egyptian style. The decoration is heavily condensed on the surface of the coffin.

Although the figures around Nut's head vary slightly on some of the coffins, as does the positioning of the zodiac figures, the majority of the iconography remains consistent in the Soter group and is even seen on a coffin outside the group, also from Thebes. The coffin of Senpeteuris, probably of a later date and of unknown provenience, has been included in this discussion, only to provide the most thorough corpus of coffins with the symbols of the zodiac represented.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, 204.

CHAPTER FOUR

EGYPTIAN ICONOGRAPHY ON THE COFFIN LIDS

The decoration of the lids of the five coffins from the Soter group and the lid from the coffin of Heter consists of both ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Roman iconography. The Egyptian iconography seems to be the most prominent on the coffin lids. Although there is Graeco-Roman iconography in the form of the twelve Greek zodiac figures, the rendering of the figures has been executed with thick, bold outlines and brightly colored pigment in the aspective view of the Egyptian canonical style. In this chapter, I will discuss the Egyptian iconography on the coffin lids of the Soter group, focusing on the figure of Nut.

Egyptian Iconography

The Egyptian iconography on the coffin lids, particularly the presence of a figure of Nut on each one, reflects important themes from the Osirian and solar mythology of the ancient Egyptians which were also featured in ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife. As early as the Old Kingdom, the ancient Egyptians included lists of spells with the deceased which were meant to be an aid during the journey to the afterlife. These spells took the form of Pyramid Texts in the Old Kingdom, Coffin Texts beginning in the Middle Kingdom, and other Books of the Afterlife in the New Kingdom. The New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife include the Book of the Dead, Amduat, and the Litany of Re, among others.¹

¹ For more information about the Pyramid Texts, see the discussion by James P. Allen in *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). For more information about

Although there are no textual excerpts from these works recorded on the coffins from the Soter group and the coffin of Heter, there are iconographic elements present that were borrowed from the solar theology represented in the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and other Books of the Afterlife. The most prominent and consistent element from these texts is the figure of Nut, who appears as the central figure on the coffin lids. Other motifs include variations of the barks of the sun god, the figure of Khepri as the reborn sun at Nut's feet, baboons greeting the rising sun, turtles, a recumbent cow, the winged uraeus, and the solar disk emanating rays of light.²

Nut

Nut plays a prominent role in the Osirian and solar iconography on the coffin lids of the Soter group and the Heter coffin. Nut is the goddess of the sky, who is often associated with her brother/husband Geb, god of the earth, and her father Shu, the air god.³ In figural representations, Nut was often depicted with both of them. As the sky goddess, Nut was portrayed as a nude woman arched over a reclining figure of Geb, with her hands and feet touching the ground. In between the figures of Nut and Geb, their father Shu was often depicted standing or kneeling and supporting the figure of Nut. This motif can be seen on funerary objects, particularly papyri, such as the one depicted in Figure 10, and coffins, as in Figure 11.⁴ Shu is positioned between Nut and Geb

the Coffin Texts, see R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3 vols. (Warminster: Aris & Philips Ltd., 1973). For a discussion of the New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife, see Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

² See Table 1 for a chart of the iconographic elements present on each coffin lid.

³ Kurth. "Nut," 535.

⁴ Ibid., 365.

illustrating the myth that Shu became jealous of the relationship between Nut and Geb, who had become so close that nothing could exist between them. Shu, therefore, separated the sky from the earth, subsequently allowing Nut to give birth to her children.⁵

Osirian Iconography of Nut

Nut was acknowledged as the mother of five gods: Osiris, Isis, Seth, Nephthys, and Horus the Elder. In one myth documented by Plutarch in his essays on Isis and Osiris, the sun god cursed Nut, preventing her from giving birth to children on any day of the year. In order to circumvent the curse so that Nut would be able to give birth, Thoth won a game against the Moon and created five extra days of the year, during which Nut could give birth. The first to be born was the god Osiris.⁶

Nut's association with Osiris was an important theme in the funerary culture of ancient Egypt. Because the deceased was usually associated with Osiris, Nut can be seen as the mother who offers protection to the deceased. In the Pyramid Texts, her role as the mother of Osiris is emphasized. In Pyramid Text 26 from the tomb of Merenre,⁷ the sky goddess is referred to as mother of Osiris the King, who "has spread herself over [the Osiris]" and "protected [the Osiris] from everything bad, in her name of ['Great

⁵ Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 174.

⁶ John Gwyn Griffiths, ed., *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Swansea: University of Wales Press, 1970), 135. For a brief discussion of the text, see Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology*, 174.

⁷ The numbering system is based on the Pyramid Text numbers given by James P. Allen in *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. For a discussion of Allen's numbering of the Pyramid Texts, see Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 3-4.

Protectress'].⁸ She is indirectly mentioned again regarding her maternal role in Pyramid Text 336 from the tomb of Merenre, which describes the deceased as “the Osiris” who is “firstborn of his mother.”⁹

Complementing her motherly and protective qualities in texts, Egyptian funerary iconography focused on her protective nature and her relationship with the deceased. Through depictions of her in tombs and on coffins, the body of the deceased would remain protected for eternity. As a protective deity, Nut appeared on coffins in two poses. As early as the New Kingdom and continuing on to later periods, a kneeling figure of Nut with outstretched wings could be found on the exterior of anthropoid coffin lids, underneath the modelled arms of the coffin, as in Figures 12 and 13.¹⁰

A second form of representation of the goddess Nut could be found on the interior of the coffin lid. In this form, she was usually depicted as an outstretched frontal figure, with hands and feet extended toward either end of the coffin. Although references to Nut appeared in Pyramid Texts in the Old Kingdom and in the Coffin texts of the Middle Kingdom, the image of Nut on the underside of a coffin lid was not developed until the New Kingdom.¹¹ For example, the sarcophagus of Merenptah from Dynasty 19 contains a

⁸ Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 213. Allen’s translation refers to Nut as *hnmt wr*, which he translates as “Great Sieve.” However, based on the orthography of the phrase recorded in the *Wörterbuch* and the writing of the hieroglyphs provided by Sethe (Spruch 588, phrase 1608), I believe that the translation, “Great Protectress” or “Protectress of the Great one” for *hnmt wr* as a description of Nut is a more appropriate reading. Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’s Buchhandlung, 1929), 382; Kurt Sethe, *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1910), 355.

⁹ Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 226-227.

¹⁰ Kurth, “Nut,” 536.

¹¹ Susan Tower Hollis, “Women of Ancient Egypt and the Sky Goddess Nut,” *Journal of American Folklore* 100, no. 398 (1987): 497-498.

relief of the sky goddess Nut underneath the lid, depicted in Figure 14. Here, the goddess is shown reaching toward either end of the coffin lid. The surface of her body is decorated with incised stars to represent the night sky. On either side of her body are representations of the barks of the sun crossing the sky.

The representation of Nut on the interior of coffin lids, begun in the New Kingdom with coffins of the type shown in Figure 14, continued through the Roman Period, with examples such as the Late Period coffin of Peftjauneith in Figure 15,¹² the Ptolemaic period coffin of Hornedjitef in Figure 16,¹³ and the Roman period coffins of Soter in Figures 1-5. The position of Nut's body remains the same in each of these examples. These images focus on Nut's role as goddess of the night sky, as representations of the stars are present in some form on each coffin. On the coffins of Merenptah and Peftjauneith, the body of the figure of Nut is covered with stars. On the coffin of Hornedjitef, depictions of planets, constellations, and decans are along either side of Nut's body, which represent the stars in the night sky.¹⁴ On the Soter group coffins, the constellations are represented by the twelve figures of the Greek zodiac.

The figures of Nut on the underside of the coffin lids of the Soter group also reflect the Osirian theme of protection for the deceased, provided by Osiris' mother, Nut. A coffin lid was the logical location for the figure of Nut because it would allow for her to cover and protect the body of the deceased, which rested just under the lid inside the

¹² "Coffin for the Mummy of Peftjauneith," Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.rmo.nl/english/collection/highlights/egyptian-collection/coffin-mummy-peftjauneith>.

¹³ Nigel Strudwick, *Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2006), 294.

¹⁴ Ibid.

coffin. The figure of Nut inside coffins refers directly to the protective nature of the goddess over her son Osiris. Her protective qualities are emphasized in several Pyramid Text utterances, in which Nut is addressed and asked to spread herself over Osiris the King in a protective manner.¹⁵ In the Coffin Texts, Nut is mentioned in Spell 80, when the deceased states that he will “live beneath Nut.”¹⁶ This statement is likely referring to both the rebirth of the deceased as a star under the night sky and the literal placing of the body of the deceased in the coffin, directly under a figure of Nut. In addition to Nut’s identity as the mother of Osiris, she was also equated with the sarcophagus and the tomb. Pyramid Text 196 of Teti identifies Nut as the sarcophagus and the tomb which embraces the Osiris (i.e. the deceased):

Nephthys has collected all your limbs for you, in her identity of Seshat, lady of builders, and has made them sound for you. You have been given to your mother Nut in her identity of the burial place, she has collected you in her identity of the burial chamber, and you have been elevated to her in her identity of the tomb’s superstructure.¹⁷

In her role as sarcophagus and tomb, Nut was able to protect “the Osiris” for eternity. By depicting Nut on the interior of coffin lids, just above the body of the deceased, her image was brought close to “the Osiris” as he rested in the coffin.

Solar Iconography of Nut

Another primary role of the goddess Nut which is represented on the coffins of the Soter group is her participation in the solar myths surrounding the sun god. In several

¹⁵ Pyramid Text 16b of Pepi I, in Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 103.

¹⁶ Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, vol. 1, 85.

¹⁷ Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 80; Nils Billing, *Nut: The Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2002), 110.

New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife, the sun god traveled through the sky in his solar bark during the twelve hours of the day, and through the netherworld through the twelve hours of the night.¹⁸ These books reflected the traditional belief that the deceased would become united with the sun god in the afterlife and accompany the sun god each night and day.¹⁹

In addition to the sun god in his various forms, key figures in these New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife were Osiris, Nut, and Khepri. The solar myth takes place around the body of Nut, who represents the night sky. Each day, the sun god was believed to have traveled in the solar bark outside Nut's outstretched body during the twelve daytime hours. Each night, the nocturnal form of the sun was swallowed by the goddess Nut, and it traveled through her body during the twelve evening hours.²⁰ Many accounts of the journey of the sun place the netherworld as the nocturnal setting of the sun god.²¹ However, some versions of the solar journey focus on the body of the sky goddess Nut as the setting of the night journey of the sun god through which the sun god travelled each night before being reborn from Nut each morning.²² Each morning, the sun was reborn

¹⁸ Stephen Quirke, *The Cult of Ra: Sun-Worship in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 43-47.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, *The Early Decans* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), 81-87.

²¹ The sun god travels through the netherworld in the Amduat, Book of Gates, Book of Caverns, Book of the Earth, and the Litany of Re. See Hornung, *Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* for a discussion of these Books of the Afterlife.

²² The sun god travels through the body of Nut in the Book of Nut, Book of the Day, and Book of the Night. The sun god is also featured in the Book of the Heavenly Cow, in which the goddess Nut appears as a cow rather than a personification of the night sky. For a brief discussion of each New Kingdom Book of the Afterlife featuring the goddess Nut, see Hornung, *Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*.

from the body of Nut, in the form of the scarab god Khepri, and the journey began again.²³

Nut's specific placement in the sky seems to have been of great importance for the ancient Egyptians, as some texts even assigned her body parts to different directions of the sky. For example, in the Book of Nut, the layout of Nut in the sky is described so that her head extends to the west and her posterior to the east.²⁴ Nut was depicted in this manner primarily on painted tomb walls during the New Kingdom. In the Book of Nut, which is represented on the ceilings of the Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos, shown in Figure 17, and the tomb of Ramesses IV in the Valley of the Kings (KV 2),²⁵ in Figure 18, the goddess is depicted as an arching figure, reminiscent of representations of the grouping of Nut, Geb, and Shu. The god Shu is present, supporting Nut's body. The winged sun disk is shown touching Nut's lips, just before being swallowed. The morning sun is shown in its manifestation as the scarab god Khepri underneath Nut's pubic region. The text of the Book of Nut is written around the figures in vertical, horizontal, and diagonal rows.²⁶

Nut is also represented as the goddess who participates in the rebirth of the sun in the Book of Day and the Book of Night, which are depicted together in the tomb of

²³ R. A. Wells, "The Mythology of Nut and the Birth of Ra," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, 19 (1992): 307; Alexander Piankoff, "The Sky-Goddess Nut and the Night Journey of the Sun," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 20 (1934): 57.

²⁴ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 43.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

Ramesses VI, as seen in Figure 19.²⁷ The tomb ceiling features two mirrored depictions of Nut in the center as a nude woman arched across the sky, with her hands and feet reaching toward the ground on either side. The action of the two Books takes place underneath Nut's bodies, representing either the twelve hours of the day or the twelve hours of the night. The placement of Nut's two bodies allows for a circular motion of the story, with the figures of its characters moving toward Nut's mouth during the day, anticipating being swallowed at night, and moving toward Nut's posterior during the night hours, ready to be reborn from her the next morning.

Although the representation of the goddess Nut on the coffins of the Soter group reflects ideas from the Osirian mythology connected with the sky goddess, the majority of the motifs are solar elements added with the depiction of Nut on each coffin that invoke her solar qualities. Osirian ideology was often paired with solar iconography on coffins in the Late Period to invoke the regenerative properties of both Osiris and the sun god.²⁸ The solar iconography on the coffins of the Soter group include solar barks, baboons, the personified hours, and the figure of Khepri. Each of the coffins includes at least one of these elements, thus participating in the solar mythology of the ancient Egyptians.²⁹

²⁷ “KV 9 (Rameses V and Rameses VI),” *Theban Mapping Project*, Accessed 14 February 2014, http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/sites/browse_tomb_823.html.

²⁸ For a discussion of solar and Osirian iconography on coffins, see Lorelei H. Corcoran, “The Mummy, Cartonnage Set, and Coffin of Irtwirw,” in *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World*, ed. Mamdouh Eldamaty and May Trad, vol. 1 (Cairo: The Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002), 231-242.

²⁹ See Table 1.

The solar barks relate directly to the New Kingdom Books of the Afterlife. They are present in the Litany of Re, Amduat, Book of Gates, Book of the Day, and Book of the Night.³⁰ The solar bark was the primary transportation of the sun god as he crossed the sky during the day. At night, the bark was escorted through the netherworld or passed through the body of Nut.³¹ The baboons on the coffin lid of Soter are present because baboons were thought to greet the rising sun. This belief comes from observation of the natural phenomenon that baboons became active during the sunrise and appeared to worship the sun.³² The personified hours are depicted on the side panels of the coffins of Soter, Kleopatra, Sensaos, and Heter. There are twelve women on each side, with upraised arms and sun disks on their heads. The coffin of Soter includes an additional element, a figure of a star depicted over each hour figure. The personified hours relate to ancient Egyptian solar theology because they are the different stages of the day or night that the sun god must travel through. The presence of Khepri directly relates to the figure of Nut when it is included in the coffin decoration. On the coffins of Soter and Kornelios Pollios, the figure of Khepri is depicted in the form of a scarab at Nut's feet. This refers to the fact that the form of the morning sun, Khepri, was reborn from Nut's body each morning.³³

The figure of Nut represented on the lids of the Soter group coffins and on the lid of the coffin of Heter invokes ideas of motherhood, protection, and ancient Egyptian

³⁰ Hornung, *Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*; Quirke, 44-47.

³¹ Quirke, 44-47.

³² Lothar Störk, "Pavian," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), 917.

³³ Assmann, "Chepre," 934.

solar theology. Although there is no accompanying text for the figure of Nut, her presence alone would have allowed for the protection of the deceased as Osiris from his “mother,” Nut. The inclusion of other elements from solar theology relates the goddess to her identity as goddess of the sky, through which “the Osiris” travelled with the nocturnal sun each night.

CHAPTER FIVE

ZODIAC FIGURES ON THE COFFIN LIDS

Early Egyptian astronomy was based on a system of thirty-six decans, or constellations of the night sky. They were used to track the passage of time, determined by which decans appeared in the sky at a given time. Diagonal star charts on the inside of coffin lids from Dynasty 9/10 to Dynasty 12 listed the decans and recorded the time of their heliacal rise, or appearance in the sky just before sunrise. During the Graeco-Roman period, the decans were replaced by the twelve signs of the zodiac constellations. However, the Greek zodiac figures were often depicted in the Egyptian style, referencing popular Egyptian motifs. In this chapter, I will discuss the figures of the Greek zodiac and their relationship with Egyptian iconography. I will then explain the decanal system of early Egyptian astronomy and the appearance of diagonal star charts on First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom coffin lids, followed by a discussion of the replacement of decans by the Greek zodiac and the function of the zodiac in Egyptian astronomy.

Twelve figures of the zodiac borrowed from Greek astronomy appear on the lids of coffins of the Soter group: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. The zodiac figures appear on only two other coffins: the coffin of Heter, in Figure 7, and the coffin of Senpeteuris, in Figure 8. What follows is an iconographic analysis of each zodiac sign as it appears on the coffins from the Soter group and the coffin of Heter with commentary on connections to Egyptian iconography where appropriate.

Within the Soter group, the coffin of Kornelios Pollios, in Figure 4, is damaged, with sections missing, and therefore the zodiac figures that would otherwise have appeared in those locations (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Sagittarius, and Pisces) are missing or poorly preserved. All twelve zodiac figures are preserved on the remaining coffins of the Soter group.

Aries

Aries is depicted as a ram on the Soter coffin lids. The ram is shown either lying down or appearing to leap in the air. Aries is painted white on the coffins of Soter, Sensaos, and Petamenophis, and a yellow pigment on the Coffin of Kleopatra. In each case, the ram is shown facing backwards, as if looking over its shoulder. The horns of the ram vary on some of the coffin lids: on the coffins of Soter and Kleopatra, Aries has curled horns of the *ovis platyra* species, but on the coffins of Petamenophis and Sensaos, the ram has horizontal horns of the *ovis longipes* species.¹ Rams with both types of horns were common in ancient Egypt and were also used in representations of deities and sacred animals, such as Khnum (*ovis longipes* species) and the Amun ram (*ovis platyra* species).² The earliest ram depicted was the *ovis longipes* species, on the Libyan Palette.³ The *ovis platyra* species was depicted as early as Dynasty 12, and later replaced depictions of *ovis longipes*.⁴

¹ Dale J. Osborn and Jana Osbornová, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1998), 193-194.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Taurus

The figure of the constellation Taurus is represented as a bull painted with reddish-brown pigment. Because Taurus follows Aries in the progression of the zodiac, the bull is positioned beside Aries on the coffins. As with Aries, Taurus is either depicted as a bull lying down or in a “leaping” position, always looking backwards with its head turned.

The bull was an important mammal in ancient Egypt. The Apis bull was worshipped throughout ancient Egyptian history, primarily in Memphis, and grew in popularity during the Late Period.⁵ Another sacred bull was Buchis, worshipped in Thebes during the Graeco-Roman period.⁶ The Mnevis bull was worshipped as a solar bull in ancient Egypt and was associated with the gods Re and Atum.⁷ It is likely that the Egyptians may have drawn influence from the Apis bull, Buchis, or Mnevis bull to render the figure of Taurus.

Gemini

Gemini, the twins zodiac sign, is depicted on the coffins of the Soter group as two male figures holding each other’s hand. The Gemini sign is visible on each coffin, including the coffin of Kornelios Pollios. However, the depiction on Kornelios Pollios’

⁵ Dorothy J. Thompson, *Memphis Under the Ptolemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 190-207.

⁶ Eberhard Otto, “Buchis,” in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 875.

⁷ László Kákosy, “Mnevis,” in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), 165-166.

coffin is damaged, with a piece of wood missing from one of the twin figures. In each example, the twins are depicted aspectively, wearing wigs and kilts, although the pigments used varies.

The pose of the two figures resembles the hieroglyphic determinative for the words *htr* or *snsn*, each meaning “twin.”⁸ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt has argued that possible Egyptian identifications of the Gemini twins are Shu and Tefnut, son and daughter of Atum, the sun.⁹ However, the Gemini figures depicted on each of the coffins from the Soter group are both males, and the identification of them as a brother and sister pair is unlikely. A possible identification of the Gemini twins drawn from Egyptian mythology could be Horus and Seth. Although Horus and Seth were not considered twins, they were brothers, representing a sense of duality.¹⁰

Cancer

Cancer is depicted as a crab with human hands and positioned under one of the arms of the figure of Nut on each coffin (Cancer is under the proper right arms on the coffins of Petamenophis, Kleopatra, Sensaos, and Heter, and under the proper left arm of the figure of Nut on the coffin of Soter). The figure of Cancer is shown from an aerial view so that its head, legs, back, and claws are visible. The shell of the crab is decorated with a loose, crosshatched design. The shape of the crab is similar to the shape of the

⁸ John Baines, “Egyptian Twins,” *Orientalia* 54 (1985): 476; Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’s Buchhandlung, 1929), 199; Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’s Buchhandlung, 1930), 172.

⁹ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, “Le Zodiaque de Pharaon,” *Archéologia* 292 (1993): 35. Shu and Tefnut are also discussed in association with the Gemini sign in Baines, “Egyptian Twins,” 475-477.

¹⁰ Baines, “Egyptian Twins,” 481.

turtles depicted on some of the coffins and the figure of Khepri on the coffin of Soter.

Crabs were not typically known in an ancient Egyptian context. Because of the location of Cancer on the coffin of Kornelios Pollios to the proper right of Nut's feet, it is possible that the figure of Cancer was meant to double as a figure of Khepri.

Leo

Leo is represented with the figure of a lion. The figure of Leo is depicted as a male lion standing on all four legs over the figure of an outstretched snake. Leo wears a mane in each depiction, but in the coffins of Petamenophis, Sensaos, and the related coffin of Heter, Leo's mane is in the form of an Egyptian wig and *was*-collar. Lion deities were powerful forces in ancient Egypt. Many deities took the form of a lion, including Sekhmet, Ruty, Tefnut, Tutu, and sometimes Bes. The figure of Leo on the Soter coffins is likely evoking the god Tutu. Tutu was a lion deity who protected from demons, controlled fate, and who was known to have both solar and kingly attributes.¹¹ Tutu traditionally appeared as a striding sphinx usually with the tail of a serpent but occasionally shown with a serpent at his paws.¹² Both Tutu and Bes were associated with protection from snakes. The god Tutu was often depicted in Egyptian astronomical scenes during the Graeco-Roman period and could have been the inspiration for the figure of Leo on the Soter group coffins.¹³

¹¹ Olaf E. Kaper, *The Egyptian God Tutu: A Study of the Sphinx-God and Master of Demons with a Corpus of Monuments* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003), 41, 55, 59.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35-37.

¹³ Olaf E. Kaper, "The Astronomical Ceiling of Deir el-Haggar in the Dakhleh Oasis," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995): 188.

Virgo

Virgo is one of the few anthropomorphic zodiac signs, and the only one on these coffins that is represented by a female. She is depicted wearing a long dress and wig, holding an ear of wheat in one hand. The figure of Virgo could function as a representation of the goddess Renenutet. Renenutet was a snake deity associated with the harvest, but she was sometimes depicted anthropomorphically.¹⁴ She was often paired with the god Nepri, the personification of grain, as a mother carrying a child.¹⁵ The depiction of Virgo best represents the syncretism of the goddesses, Isis, Renenutet, and Thermouthis, invoking both the harvest and fertility.¹⁶

Libra

The zodiac sign, Libra, takes the form of a set of scales. The scales on the coffins of Petamenophis and Sensaos are depicted with figures of a solar disk above the center, while the coffins of Soter and Kleopatra have scales with a seated baboon on top. This is reminiscent of scenes of the Weighing of the Heart ceremony, in which Thoth (often represented as a baboon) is an active participant. For example, a scene from the Book of the Dead of the Singer of Amun, Nany, seen in Figure 20, depicts a set of scales with a seated figure of Thoth on top. The heart is being weighed against a figure of the anthropomorphic goddess, Maat.

¹⁴ Joseph Leibovitch, "Gods of Agriculture and Welfare in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

¹⁶ Lorelei H. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I-IV Centuries A.D.) with a Catalog of Portrait Mummies in Egyptian Museums* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1995), 73, 179.

Scorpio

The constellation, Scorpio, is preserved on each coffin in the form of a scorpion with human hands. The body of the scorpion is rendered in a narrow oval shape, with legs on either side and large claws which resemble the claws on the figures of Cancer and Khepri. The overall shape of the figures of Scorpio resembles the hieroglyphic determinative of the scorpion.¹⁷ The scorpion tail on each figure appears as segmented circular shapes that end in a pointed stinger. On the coffins of Kornelios Pollios, Soter, and Sensaos, Scorpio is painted with a white pigment, but on the coffin of Petamenophis, Scorpio is black. The scorpion in Egyptian iconography is often associated with the goddess, Selket, who was commonly depicted in anthropomorphic form with a scorpion on her head. The goddess Selket acted in Egyptian mythology as a protective deity, who aided against harmful agents, such as the scorpion.¹⁸

Sagittarius

Sagittarius is depicted as a figure of a centaur (half man, half horse), shooting a bow and arrow. In each representation, the centaur wears an Egyptian wig. On the coffins of Petamenophis, Sensaos, Kleopatra, and Heter, the centaur is depicted with a set of wings on its back. This manner of depicting Sagittarius comes from early Babylonian depictions on boundary stones, in which the centaur also has wings and a bow and

¹⁷ Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 478.

¹⁸ Frédérique von Känel, "Selket," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), 830-832.

arrow.¹⁹ On the coffins of Petamenophis and Heter, Sagittarius wears a solar crown commonly worn by the gods Re and Osiris in his solarized forms.²⁰ On the coffin of Heter, Sagittarius has a Janus face of a man and a lion. Because the horse was not introduced into Egypt until the later periods, it is not likely that the figure of Sagittarius drew from ancient Egyptian motifs.

Capricorn

The zodiac figure, Capricorn, is on each coffin and represented as a half goat, half fish figure. On each coffin, the head and front legs of the goat are painted black, while the body, represented in fish form, is painted with white pigment with details in yellow in some cases. In most coffins, the figure of Capricorn is located in its proper position, among the other zodiac figures. However, in the coffin of Petamenophis, the figure of Capricorn appears near the top of the scene, next to the proper right hand of the figure of Nut. Capricorn is a Babylonian motif not previously seen in Egyptian iconography.²¹

Aquarius

Aquarius is another anthropomorphic zodiac sign, represented as a male. Although not in the traditional order of the constellations, Aquarius is preserved on the coffin of Kornelios Pollios (beside the figure of Gemini) and in the proper order on each

¹⁹ B. L. van der Waerden, "History of the Zodiac," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 16 (1952-1953), 226.

²⁰ Katja Goebis, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth, and Destruction* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2008), 62-64.

²¹ Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demon and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 93.

other coffin in the group. The figure of Aquarius can be closely associated with the god Hapy, the personification of the Nile River. The figure of Aquarius is shown wearing a kilt and wig, and holding a *hs*-vase with water pouring out in each hand. On the coffins of Petamenophis, Kleopatra, Sensaos, and Heter, he wears a hieroglyphic determinative of a “clump of papyrus with buds bent down” on his head.²² Although Aquarius is depicted standing, with skin-colored pigment on most of the coffin lids, he is depicted kneeling and painted in a blue-green pigment on the coffin of Soter, which is likely related to his connection with water. Like Aquarius on the coffin of Soter, Hapy was often depicted as a male deity with blue skin, wearing a clump of papyrus on his head. Here, the figure of Aquarius refers to the flooding of the Nile.

Pisces

The final zodiac constellation, Pisces, is depicted as two fish connected by a string. They appear on each coffin, although only the string and the mouths of the fishes are preserved on the coffin of Kornelios Pollios. The fish are depicted parallel to each other, painted in white pigment with yellow details. The scales of each fish are rendered in an abstract manner on the surface of the fishes’ bodies. The fish are likely referring to tilapia, which were common fish in ancient Egypt and often depicted in hunting scenes on the Nile as symbols of fertility and sexual reproduction.²³

²² Gardiner, 481.

²³ Douglas J. Brewer and Renée F. Friedman, *Fish and Fishing in Ancient Egypt* (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1989), 2; Elissa Jane Ferguson, “Time and Meaning: The Use of the Fishing and Fowling Scene Through Time in Ancient Egyptian Non-Royal Tombs” (M.A. Thesis, University of Memphis, 2012), 69.

Function of the Greek Zodiac

The figures of the Greek zodiac represent twelve constellations of stars that appear at different times over the course of one year. They are positioned along the ecliptic, or the line of the apparent movement of the sun across the horizon.²⁴ With the zodiac calendar system, the sky was divided into twelve 30° zones, equaling a 360° circle. Each constellation was positioned in one of the 30° zones. Because the position of the stars in the night sky was used to keep track of the passage of time, the zodiac signs represent the division of one year into twelve, thirty day periods or months. Each sign was assigned to a particular month and, during a particular month, the sun dwelled in the corresponding sign.²⁵ In addition to using the constellations to identify the months, the Hellenistic world used them to tell time during the night. Only six zodiac signs were visible in the night sky during a particular season. Each of the six signs rose for two hours at a time, allowing people to determine the hours based on the stars.²⁶

Egyptian Astronomy: Decans and Star Charts on Middle Kingdom Coffin Lids

Although the Soter coffins use figures from Greek astronomy, the ancient Egyptians had their own complex astronomical systems which were recorded on the interiors of Middle Kingdom coffin lids and remained in use throughout ancient Egypt's history. The Egyptian astronomical systems even influenced the calendar system of

²⁴ Charles H. Kahn, "On Early Greek Astronomy," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970), 102.

²⁵ van der Waerden, "History of the Zodiac," 218.

²⁶ Ibid.

ancient Greece.²⁷ The Egyptian calendar contained 365 days: twelve months of thirty days, with 5 epagomenal days added to the end of the year.²⁸ As early as the First Intermediate Period, the ancient Egyptians measured time with the use of decans.²⁹ The Egyptian decans were representations of thirty-six constellations in the night sky. The apparent movement of the sun across the horizon was divided into thirty-six segments (360°).³⁰ To keep track of the passage of time, the ancient Egyptians focused on one segment in the eastern horizon: the *msqt* region.³¹ Each decan represented 10° of the horizon and was visible for ten days at a time in the *msqt* region.³² The heliacal rise of decans in the *msqt* region of the sky marked a particular ten-day period of the year.³³

This calendar system was recorded in the form of star charts under the lids of rectangular coffins as early as Dynasties 9/10.³⁴ The names of decans were listed in a table of thirty-six columns and twelve lines, which was read from right to left, as seen in Figure 21.³⁵ Each decan is listed multiple times, diagonally across the chart. The columns

²⁷ O. Neugebauer, "The Origin of the Egyptian Calendar," in *Astronomy and History: Selected Essays* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), 196.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Some decans were named in the Pyramid Texts, but the function of decans was not established until the First Intermediate Period. L. Kákosy, "Decans in Late Egyptian Religion," *Oikumene* 3 (1982): 163.

³⁰ O. Neugebauer, "The Egyptian 'Decans,'" in *Astronomy and History: Selected Essays* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), 205-207.

³¹ Joanne Conman, "It's About Time: Ancient Egyptian Cosmology," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 31 (2003), 37.

³² Neugebauer, "Egyptian 'Decans,'" 207; Conman, "It's About Time," 37.

³³ Conman, "It's About Time," 37.

³⁴ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 4-21.

³⁵ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 1; Neugebauer, "Egyptian 'Decans,'" 205.

chart the decans that appear during each of the twelve hours of the night. The vertical columns indicate the periods of ten days (decade), while the horizontal rows indicate the hour.³⁶ The position of the decans changes each decade as a new decan rises heliacally in the sky. On the far left of the chart, there are four additional columns. The first three list the thirty-six decans in order, while the fourth is most likely reserved for the epagomenal days.³⁷

In *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, Volume 1, *The Early Decans*, authors Otto Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker list twelve coffins with diagonal star charts, from Dynasty 9/10 to Dynasty 12.³⁸ The coffins are primarily from Asyut, but some are from Thebes, Aswan, and Gebelein.³⁹ Each of the coffins listed contains a star chart under the lid. In most cases, the rows and columns are broken up to allow for horizontal rows of text naming deities to which offerings are given and scenes with figures of Nut, the Foreleg (Big Dipper), Orion, and Sothis.⁴⁰

As an example, on the coffin lid of Idy, Figure 22, the central horizontal row of text divides the lid in half, and the scene with the figures is perpendicular to the horizontal registers. The star chart appears as separate columns depicting images of stars in between each list of decans. The figures of Nut, the Foreleg, Orion, and Sothis are positioned perpendicular to the chart and coffin text, in between the eighteenth and

³⁶ Neugebauer, "Egyptian 'Decans,'" 206.

³⁷ Neugebauer, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-21.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-29.

nineteenth decades. The figure of Nut is on the viewer's left. She is depicted wearing a dress that leaves her breasts exposed (only one shown, in profile). On her head is a long wig. She does not have the *nw*-pot headdress but instead holds a determinative for "sky" in her upraised arms. She is facing the figure of the Foreleg, or Big Dipper, which is on the proper left of the figure of Nut. The Foreleg is depicted as the foreleg of an ox, decorated with stars that form the Big Dipper constellation.⁴¹ On the other side of the horizontal row of texts that runs through this scene are the figures of Orion and Sothis. Orion is at the viewer's right. His body is oriented to the viewer's right, but he turns his head behind him, facing the opposite direction. He wears a kilt and holds a *w3s*-scepter in his forward hand and an *ꜥnh* symbol in the other. On his head is the hieroglyph, *s3h*, for the name Orion.⁴² On the viewer's far right is the figure of Sothis, goddess of the star Sirius.⁴³ She wears a dress that reveals her breasts (again, only one shown in profile) and holds a *w3s*-scepter and an *ꜥnh* symbol. On her head is the *spd* hieroglyph.⁴⁴ Each of these figures represents an important element of the night sky: Nut is the goddess of the sky, while the four remaining characters represent constellations.

Egyptian Astronomical Influences on Greek Astronomy

The Greek zodiac system was influenced by both Egyptian and Babylonian sources. Because the decans from ancient Egyptian astronomy represented 10° zones in the night sky, they were grouped in sets of three in the Hellenistic system and assigned to

⁴¹ Ibid., 28.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 29.

each of the twelve zodiac constellations, which took up 30° zones. However, the function of the decans did not endure, and they were only known to later, Hellenistic astronomers by their names and the fact that they represented 10° zones.⁴⁵ Although the decans did not endure functionally, they often appeared with the Greek zodiac figures in later ancient Egyptian temples, such as the Temple of Dendera in Figure 23.⁴⁶ This practice shows the continued significance of depicting the decans in art as representations of the concept of the passage of time, even though they served no functional purpose in astronomy at the time.

⁴⁵ Parker, "Ancient Egyptian Astronomy," 62.

⁴⁶ Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Painting*, vol. 6, *Upper Egypt: Chief Temples* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 99.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIGURES OF NUT, SOTHIS, AND THE ZODIAC ON THE COFFIN LIDS OF THE SOTER GROUP

The figures of Nut and the zodiac seem to serve more than one function on the coffin lids of the Soter group. The figure of Nut functions as a protective mother for the deceased and as the sky goddess who assists with the passage of the sun each day and night, roles both taken from Osirian and solar mythology, respectively. In addition to recalling popular motifs from the ancient Egyptian tradition, the zodiac figures function as representations of the constellations in the night sky, which surround the figure of Nut. On the coffin lids of the Soter group, the figures of Nut and the zodiac appear to serve separate functions, but I will argue that they also function together here to mark the passages of years and bring about yearly regeneration for the deceased. This chapter will discuss the relationship between the figures of Nut and the zodiac and the importance of the goddess, Sothis, as a possible link between the two.

Archaizing on the Coffins of the Soter Group

The placement of the zodiac figures on the interior of the coffin lids of the Soter group is perhaps influenced by the appearance of diagonal star charts on coffin lids from Dynasties 9/10-12 and is possibly a form of archaizing. Archaizing, as the revival of artistic motifs, language, or burial practices from the past, was a common practice in ancient Egypt.¹ The height of archaizing began in Dynasty 26,² but the practice continued

¹ Peter Der Manuelian, *Living in the Past: Studies in Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-Sixth Dynasty* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1994), xxxv.

² Ibid.

throughout the rest of Egypt's ancient history. Christina Riggs argues that much of the exterior decoration on the Soter coffins was drawn from motifs known from the Temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina, from the Ptolemaic Period.³ The motifs described include the Four Winds, the Judgement Scene, and depictions of Imhotep and Amenhotep.⁴

Because Riggs focuses on the exterior decoration of the Soter coffins, the figures of the zodiac and Nut on the interior are not addressed in detail. However, these motifs could also be viewed as a form of archaizing. Although they do not fit the early star chart format found on some rectangular coffin lids, the idea of depicting the stars does seem to be connected to examples of Dynasty 9/10-12 diagonal star charts. Whereas it may not have been likely that Egyptians in Thebes would have had access to Dynasty 9/10-12 coffins from Asyut, the practice of recording star charts underneath coffin lids was known in Thebes during Dynasty 11 as evidenced by a Theban coffin with a star chart in Neugebauer and Parker's corpus. It may be that there were more coffins of this type produced in Thebes that were accessible in the Graeco-Roman period.⁵ Another source of influence may have been the Dynasty 18 Astronomical Ceiling from Tomb 353 of Senenmut from Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, shown in Figure 9. This ceiling contains a list of decans and depicts Sothis, Orion, the planets, and other astronomical figures.⁶ It seems that in the Soter coffins, the idea of depicting the stars has been revived but executed in an updated manner by replacing the Egyptian decans with the Greek zodiac, which

³ Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources," 317.

⁴ Ibid., 317-325.

⁵ Neugebauer, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 10.

⁶ See Dorman, *Tombs of Senenmut*, 138-147 for a discussion of the astronomical ceiling.

corresponds to the Graeco-Roman beliefs of the time. Key figures on the coffin lids of the Soter group were also common on early diagonal star charts: Nut, the constellations (depicted on the Soter coffins as the figures of the Zodiac), and Sothis, whom Christina Riggs believes is represented in her cow form on the coffins of the Soter group.⁷

Sothis

Sothis was the Greek counterpart of the Egyptian goddess of the Morning Star, Sopdet, and personification of the star, Sirius.⁸ Because the heliacal rise of Sirius, or appearance in the night sky in the *msqt* region just before the sunrise, marked the beginning of the year on the Egyptian calendar, Sothis was an important deity in ancient Egyptian astronomy.⁹ The Sothic year revolved around the appearance of Sirius in the sky, beginning with the star's heliacal rising for ten days at the start of a new year, followed by its appearance in the sky during the periods of heliacal rising for other constellations, and finally a seventy day period in which Sirius could not be seen in the night sky, before its heliacal rise again in the new year.¹⁰

The heliacal rise of the star Sirius did not occur on the same day of the lunar calendar each year. As early as the Middle Kingdom, the heliacal rise of Sirius was called *prt spdt*, "the Going Forth of Sothis," and it typically occurred during the final month of

⁷ Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources," 327.

⁸ Sothis is identified as the Morning Star in the Pyramid Texts. Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 48; Kákosy, "Sothis," 1110-1117.

⁹ A. S. von Bomhard, *The Egyptian Calendar: A Work for Eternity* (London: Periplus Publishing, 1999), 26.

¹⁰ von Bomhard, *Egyptian Calendar*, 26.; Teije de Jong, "The Heliacal Rise of Sirius," in *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, ed. Erik Hornung et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 432.

the lunar year, called *wp rnpt*, or “Opener of the Year.”¹¹ Because the heliacal rise of Sirius occurred every 365.256 days¹² and the lunar calendar lasted 354 days,¹³ it was likely that Sirius would not rise heliacally during the lunar month *wp rnpt* and would instead rise in a following month.¹⁴ To avoid this problem and keep the month *wp rnpt* during the same time as the rise of Sirius, the ancient Egyptians added a thirteenth month to the end of their lunar calendar after the rise of Sirius if it occurred within the last eleven days of *wp rnpt*. For example, if Sirius rose on the twentieth day of the last month, the remaining ten days would be a thirteenth month, and the new year would start after the tenth day, keeping the heliacal rise of Sirius in the month, *wp rnpt*, and allowing Sirius to mark the start of the new year.¹⁵

The personification of the star, Sirius, was the goddess Sothis (Sopdet). Sothis was commonly depicted in art as a female anthropomorphic figure, often wearing a crown with horns and a star on her head.¹⁶ On the coffin lids with diagonal star charts from Dynasties 9/10-12, she appears with the *spd* hieroglyph on her head, as in Figure 22.¹⁷ In some cases, she was depicted as a dog because another name for Sirius was the

¹¹ Juan Antonio Belmonte, “The Egyptian Calendar: Keeping Ma’at on Earth,” in *In Search of Cosmic Order: Selected Essays on Egyptian Archaeoastronomy*, ed. Juan Antonio Belmonte and Mosalam Shaltout (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities Press, 2009), 110-111.; Richard A. Parker, “The Calendars and Chronology,” in *The Legacy of Egypt*, ed. J.R. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 15.

¹² von Bomhard, *Egyptian Calendar*, 28.

¹³ Parker, “Calendars and Chronology,” 15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Parker, “Calendars and Chronology,” 15-16.; de Jong, “Heliacal Rise of Sirius,” 432.

¹⁶ Kákosy, “Sothis,” 1111.

¹⁷ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 1, 29.

Dog Star.¹⁸ This name refers to the location of Sirius in relation to the constellation Orion because when the two appear together, Sirius resembles a dog at Orion's feet.¹⁹ Sothis was often identified with other goddesses of ancient Egypt. Most common were her identifications with the goddesses Isis and Hathor, but she was also known to be identified with Sekhmet, Bastet, and Menhyt.²⁰

Riggs argues that it is possible that a figure of a reclining cow with a horned sun disk in the lunettes at the feet of coffins of Soter, Kleopatra, Petamenophis, and Sensaos represents the goddess Sothis in her cow form.²¹ Here, Sothis would have been identified with the cow goddess Hathor and shares her role as a protector for the deceased in the coffin.²² Sothis is depicted in the lunette at the foot of the coffins as a cow reclining on top of a shrine, facing the proper left. She wears a horned sun disk on her head. On the coffins of Kleopatra, Petamenophis, and Sensaos, a *ba*-bird is placed in front of the Sothis cow.²³ On the coffin of Soter, Sothis wears an *ꜥnh* amulet around her neck. On the coffins of Kleopatra and Sensaos, the cow wears a *menit* necklace closely associated with Hathor.²⁴

Sothis is depicted on the lunette at the foot of the coffins, below the feet of the figure of Nut. If the position of Sothis on the coffin lids is taken into account, her

¹⁸ G. A. Wainwright, "Orion and the Great Star," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (1936): 45.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kákosy, "Sothis," 1110.

²¹ Riggs, "Archaism and Artistic Sources," 327.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

relationship with the goddess Nut is emphasized. In Egyptian mythology, Sothis was born from the goddess Nut to mark the beginning of a new year. In the Pyramid Texts, Sothis is mentioned several times regarding her relationship to Nut. In the Pyramid Texts of Pepi I, Sothis is described as the daughter of Nut:

The sky has become pregnant with wine,
Nut has delivered her daughter the morning star,
and he will raise himself,
the third (companion) of Sothis of clean places.²⁵

Here, Nut is described as mother of Sothis, who delivers the star (Sirius). It was believed that when Sirius was not visible in the sky for a period of seventy days, Sothis was in the Duat.²⁶ After the period of seventy days, Sirius would rise heliacally in the sky. The birth of Sothis is mentioned again in Pyramid Text 458 of Pepi I, which explains that “the sky has been bled and Sothis lives.”²⁷ The sky in this spell is the goddess Nut, and the bleeding mentioned is the act of giving birth to the goddess Sothis. I propose that if the lunette is viewed as a continuation of the scene with the figure of Nut, the viewer can see how Sothis relates to Nut as the daughter of the sky-goddess because of her position under Nut’s feet.

The period of seventy days in the Duat before the birth of the star Sirius is similar to the nightly path of the sun in the Amduat, in which the sun travels through the Duat each night and is reborn from Nut each morning.²⁸ Thus, it seems fitting that a celestial

²⁵ Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 155.

²⁶ Neugebauer, “Egyptian ‘Decans,’” 207.

²⁷ Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 139.

²⁸ R. A. Wells, “Origin of the Hour and the Gates of the Duat,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 20 (1993): 319.

being that appears just before the sun upon its return to the sky at the beginning of the year (the heliacal rising of Sirius) would also be born from the body of Nut. This is also true for other decans during their periods of heliacal rise. In Carlsberg Papyrus I, a Roman Period translation of earlier astronomical texts into Demotic, the stars are said to “pass 90 days ‘in the west’ before they are ‘enclosed’ by the *dw3t*” for a period of seventy days.²⁹

A direct reference to Sothis as the daughter of Nut can be seen on the inner coffin lid of Wedjarenes, Figure 24, from Dynasty 26. On this coffin, a nude figure of Nut is depicted frontally, with outstretched arms. The hieroglyph, *spd*, representing the goddess Sothis (Sopdet) is depicted on her belly above her pubic region, as if in the womb of Nut.³⁰ It is possible that this element can be interpreted as a stylized navel. To my knowledge, examples of Nut depicted on coffin lids with a navel are limited to carvings in relief, and the lack of painted depictions of navels on coffin lids supports the argument that the triangular sign can be interpreted as the *spd*-hieroglyph. In addition to the depiction of Sothis, the figure of Nut interacts with two versions of the sun: one between her hands and likely on its way to being swallowed by the sky, and another just under her pubic region, as if it is just being born from Nut and appearing as the morning form of the sun in the sky. This coffin lid could be a reference to the heliacal rise of the star Sirius and the celebration of a new year. This type of representation allows for a cyclical renewal of the year and the passage of time for the deceased.

²⁹ J. Conman, “It’s About Time,” 40, 42.

³⁰ Special thanks to my colleague, Ashley Stanton, for this observation. I have searched for other examples of the *spd* hieroglyph depicted on the belly of Nut on coffin lids, but was unable to find existing parallels.

Nut, Sothis, and the Zodiac Figures on the Soter Group Coffins

If viewed as a linear progression, the coffin lid of Soter, with the reclining cow figure of the goddess Sothis and the figure of the morning sun god, Khepri, could be a reference to the heliacal rise of Sirius at the beginning of each new year. Both Sirius (as the goddess Sothis) and the morning sun are born from Nut. In nature, Sirius appears first in the sky, just before the sun, so Sothis is the first figure born from Nut and appears furthest from her feet. Next is born the morning form of the sun, Khepri, who appears in between Nut's feet on the coffin lid. The positioning of each figure represents the order of rebirth from the sky-goddess, emphasizing Sothis' role as the beginning of the yearly cycle.

Together, the depictions of Sothis and Nut on the coffin lids represent the start of a new year of regeneration for the deceased. According to Jan Assmann in "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt," through the repeated rebirth from the sky-goddess, the deceased could be united with the stars as a star-god.³¹ The cyclical nature of the "passage" of the stars across the sky allowed for a regenerative cycle of the deceased, starting each new year with the heliacal rise of Sirius. The figures of the zodiac depicted on either side of the figure of Nut on each coffin marks a new month in the cycle and helps continue the progression of time.

The coffin itself is also aiding in the regenerative properties of Nut. Assmann argues that the coffin represents the womb of Nut.³² The placement of the body of the

³¹ Jan Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt," in *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, ed. W.K. Simpson (New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1989), 139-140.

³² Ibid.

deceased inside the coffin allowed it to transform in the “womb of Nut” and become a star-god who would continue to be reborn with the other stars in the night sky.³³ This belief can be attested earlier in the Pyramid Texts, in which the king becomes a Circumpolar Star in several utterances.³⁴ This objective seems to have been supplanted in Egyptian thought in favor of Osirian and solar mythology until later periods.

The figures of Nut, the zodiac, and Sothis on the coffin lids of the Soter group work together not only to keep track of the passage of time as a possible archaizing feature drawn from diagonal star charts, but they also serve the purpose of regenerating the deceased each year and allowing the deceased to be reborn in the cycle of the stars in the night sky. The key figure who links Nut with the zodiac on these coffins is Sothis, who is the principal star of the night sky who participates in the regeneration process first. The rebirth of Sothis into the night sky and Sirius’ heliacal rise leads the way for other stars to rise heliacally and be reborn each year during the month with which they are associated. Thus, because the deceased was united with the stars as a star-god, he was able to participate in this same cyclical renewal within the coffin.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Faulkner, “King and the Star-Religion,” 155.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

The coffins from the Soter group burial are each decorated to reflect Egyptian ideas of the afterlife, but zodiac figures only appear on five of the fourteen Soter group coffins and only on two other Roman period coffins outside the Soter group. Osirian and solar iconography also appears on each coffin in discussion. This study has examined the figure of Nut, who plays a key role in both the Osirian and solar mythology of the ancient Egyptians. She acted as a protective mother for the deceased and was thereby a participant in the solar cycle in which the sun god travelled across the sky during the day and through the body of Nut each night. The solar mythology of Nut is an example of Egyptians attributing the role of a god or goddess to a natural phenomenon.

In addition to documenting her Osirian and solar roles, this study has analyzed how the figure of the goddess Nut worked with figures of the zodiac and Sothis on the coffins of Soter in order to effect the transformation of the deceased into a star in the night sky. The presence of stars recorded on coffin lids was not unknown to ancient Egyptian iconography. The practice can be observed on early Middle Kingdom coffin lids. However, the primary participants on Middle Kingdom coffin lids were the decans, or constellations, that were assigned to each hour of the night and represented 10° divisions in the night sky. The decans appeared on Middle Kingdom coffin lids as lists of names organized in a diagonal chart. The appearance of these star charts on coffin lids would have ensured yearly renewal for the deceased as well as served the function of keeping track of the passage of time.

The decans continued to be used in the New Kingdom on the ceilings of funerary monuments. However, after the New Kingdom, while the decans appeared in Egyptian iconography, their functional purpose was lost and depictions of them were simply anachronistic. They appeared alongside figures of the zodiac on temples, such as the temples at Dendara¹ and Esna.² The figures of the zodiac, which each represent 30° divisions of the night sky, seem to have replaced the decans in function and served as markers for the passage of time and months of the year.

Although the functionality of the decans did not endure, the goddess Sothis, personification of the Morning Star Sirius (depicted as a recumbent cow on coffins from the Soter group), remained an important figure for the Egyptians. Sothis was associated with the new year because the heliacal rise of Sirius in the sky occurred just before each new lunar year began. The Sothic calendar was based on the heliacal rise of Sothis, and was divided into days and months based on this natural occurrence. In addition to her identification with the new year, Sothis was thought of as the daughter of Nut. In this way, Sothis also plays a role in Egyptian solar mythology, as the one who is born from Nut just before Khepri, the morning form of the sun. This can be seen in the placement of the figures of Nut, Khepri, and Sothis on the coffin of Soter, which follows a linear narrative format.

This study has analyzed and identified how the appearance of Nut, the zodiac, and Sothis inside coffins lids of the Graeco-Roman period aided in the function of the coffin as a transformative space for the deceased that allowed them to become associated with

¹ Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 6, 41-110.

² Ibid., 110-119.

Osiris, the sun god, and stars in the night sky. Nut served as a protective mother for the deceased inside the coffin whose outstretched body covered the deceased. She also acts as the space through which the deceased travelled with the sun god in the afterlife, as seen in Books of the Afterlife which feature Nut. Finally, the figures of the zodiac and Sothis relate to the transformation of the deceased into a star, a belief which can be seen as early as the Pyramid Texts and that seems to have experienced a revival during the Graeco-Roman period, as documented by the Soter coffin group.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1. Egyptian Iconography Present on Soter Coffins and Coffin of Heter

	Soter	Kleopatra	Petamenophis	Kornelios Pollios	Sensaos	Heter
Nut	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nw-pot Headdress	X	--	--	--	--	--
Sun Disk with Rays	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personified Hours	X	X	?	?	X	X
Solar Barks	X	--	--	--	--	--
Khepri	X	--	--	X		--
Baboons	X	--	--	--	--	--
Recumbent Cow	X	X	X	?	X	?

APPENDIX B

FIGURES



Figure 1. Coffin of Soter. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. British Museum. Accession Number: EA 6705. From “Lid of the coffin of Soter.” The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/1/lid_of_the_coffin_of_soter.aspx.



Figure 2. Coffin of Kleopatra. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. British Museum. Accession Number: EA 6706. From "Coffin of Cleopatra." The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/coffin_of_cleopatra.aspx.



Figure 3. Coffin of Petamenophis. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. Louvre Museum. Accession Number: E 13048. From O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, *Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), Plate 47.



Figure 4. Coffin of Kornelios Pollios. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. British Museum. Accession Number: EA 6950. From O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, *Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), Plate 46.

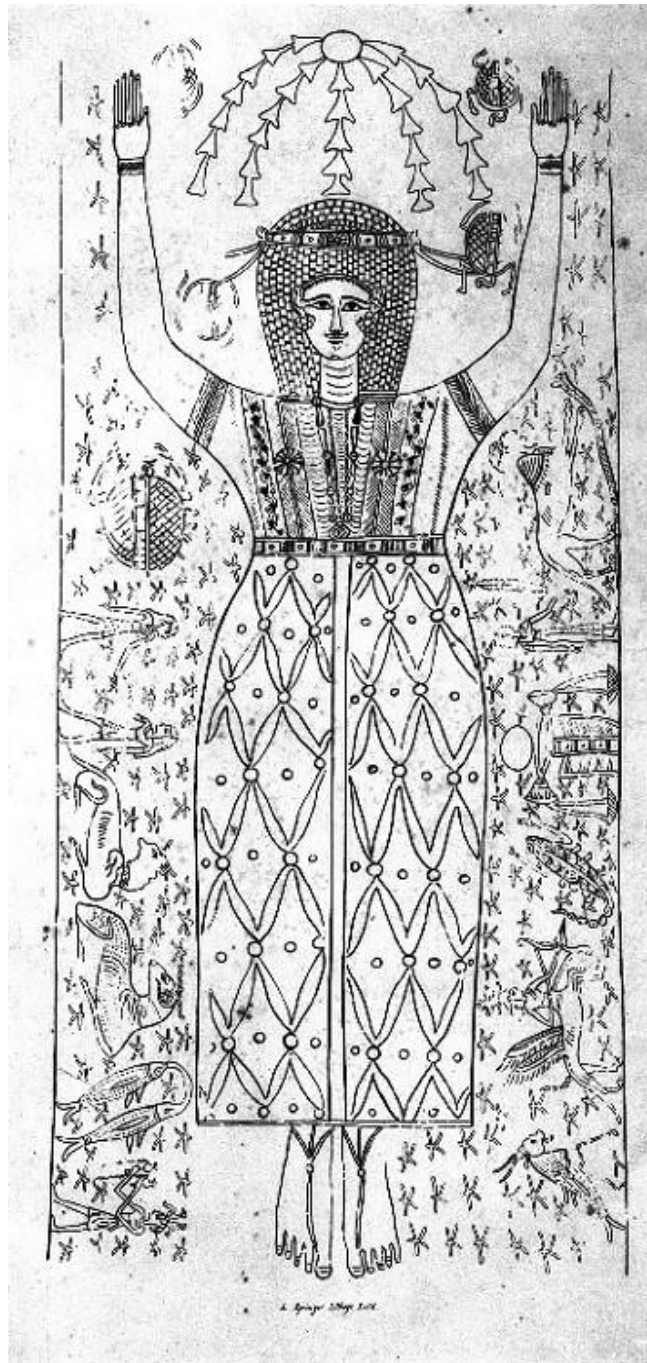


Figure 5. Line Drawing of Coffin of Sensaos. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Accession Number: AAM 8-c. From "Post Sarcophagus; Sensaos." Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.rmo.nl/collectie/zoeken?object=AMM+8-c>.



Figure 6. Coffin of Tpaesus. Qurna, Thebes, Egypt. Early 2nd Century AD. British Museum. Accession Number: EA 6708. From "Coffin of Tpaesus." The British Museum, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/coffin_of_tpaesus.aspx.

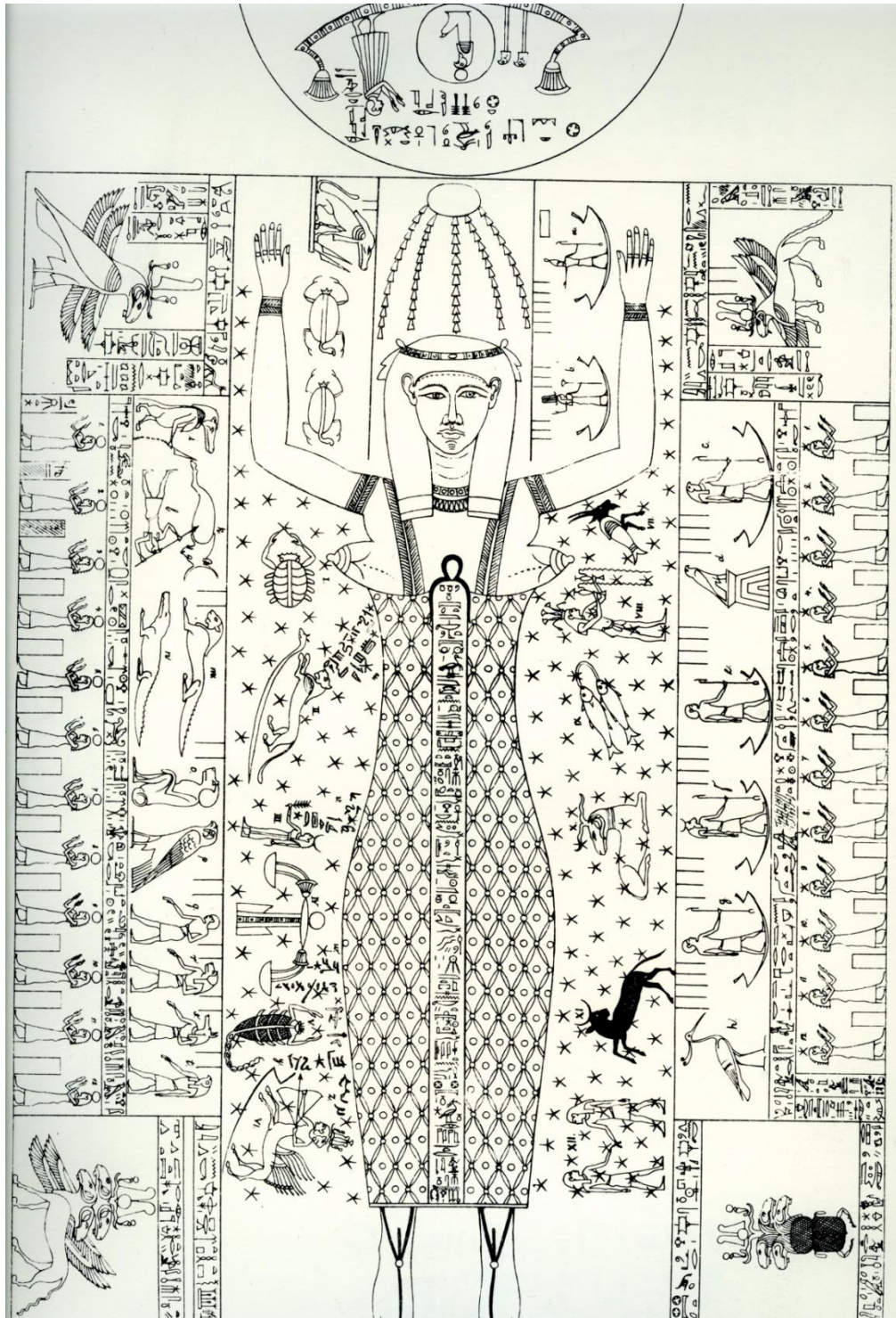


Figure 7. Line Drawing of Coffin of Heter. Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, Egypt. Roman Period.
 From O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3,
Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs (Providence: Brown University Press,
 1969), Plate 50.

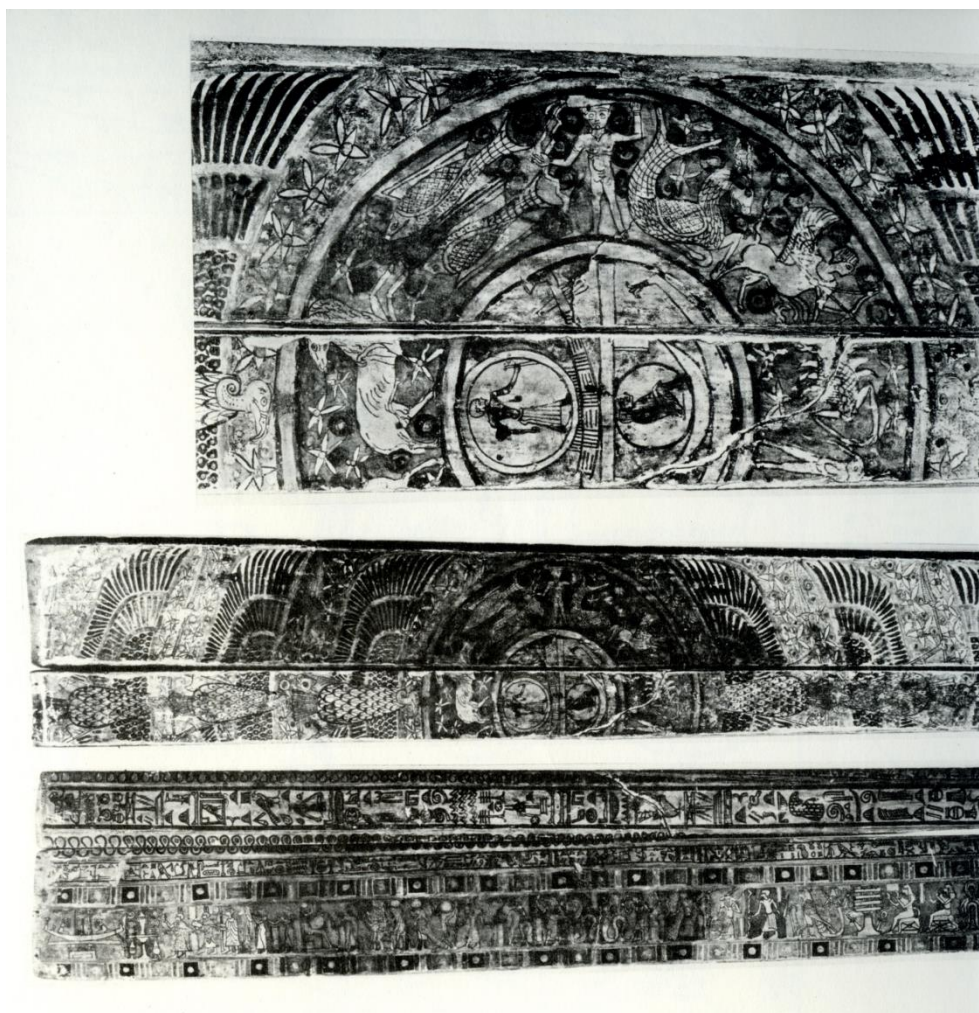


Figure 8. Coffin of Senpeteuris. Provenience Unknown. Roman Period. From O. Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, vol. 3, *Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), Plate 49.

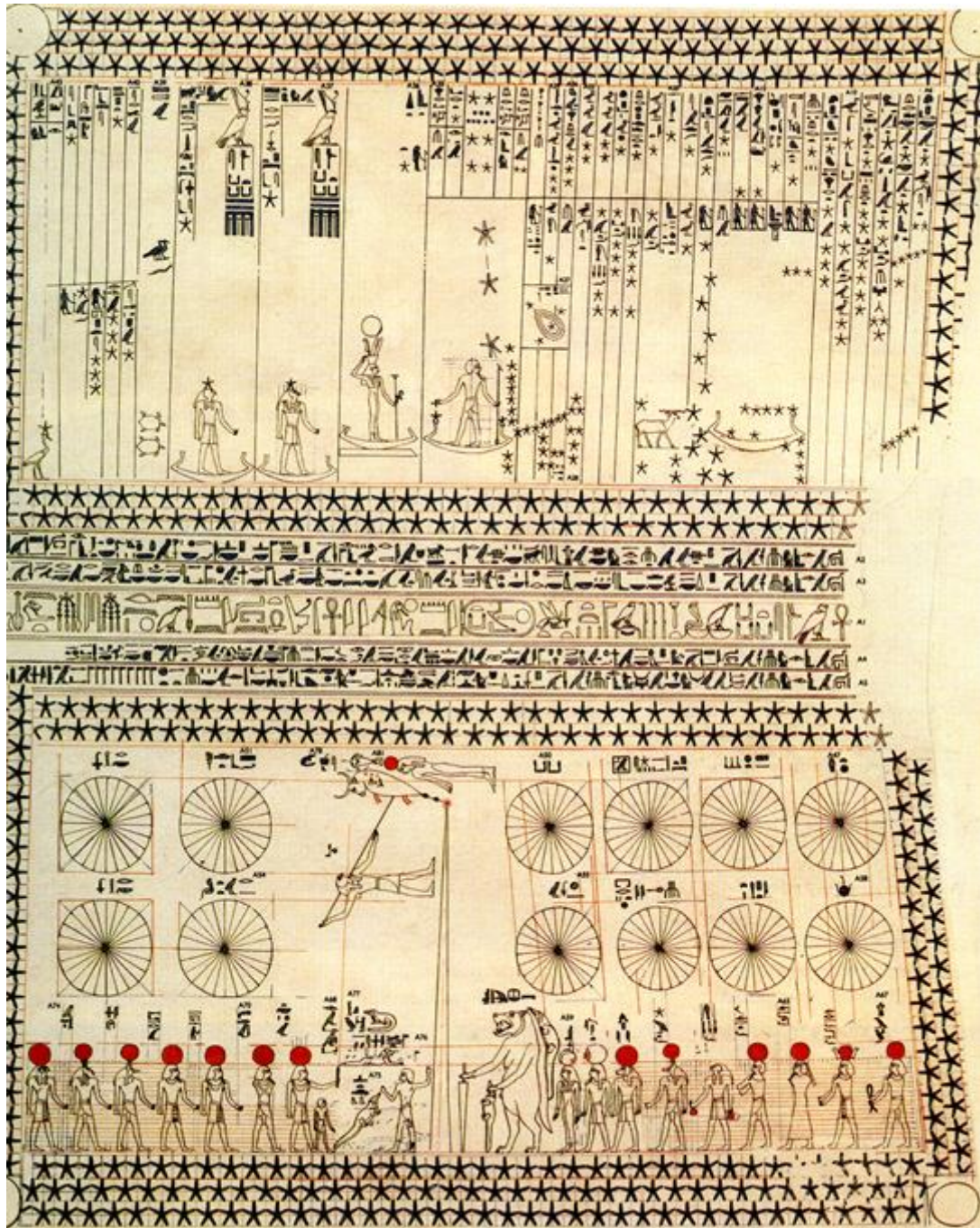


Figure 9. Astronomical Ceiling of Senenmut. Tomb 353 of Senenmut, Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, Egypt. 18th Dynasty. From Peter F. Dorman, *The Tombs of Senenmut: The Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), Plate 85.

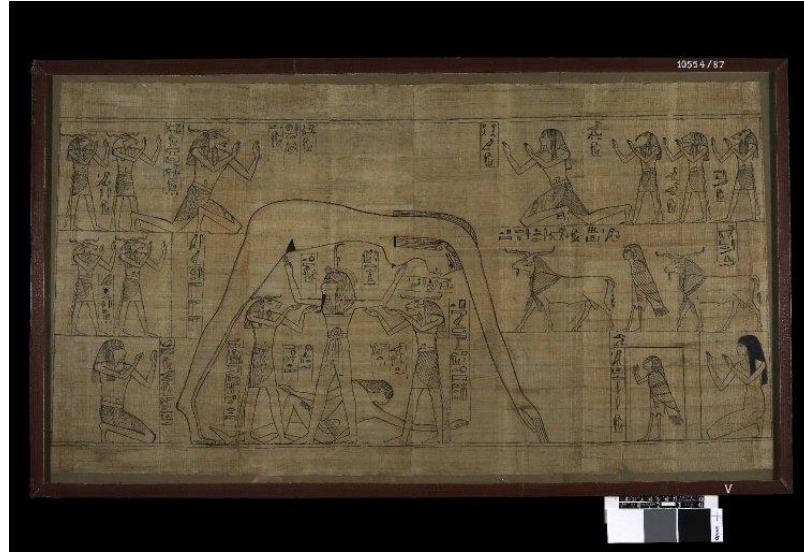


Figure 10. The Greenfield Papyrus. Book of the Dead of Nestanebtasheru (sheet 87). Deir el-Bahari, Second Cache, Thebes, Egypt. Ca. 940 BC. British Museum. Accession Number: EA10554,87. From “The Greenfield Papyrus,” The British Museum, accessed February 14, 2014, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=114900&partId=1&searchText=greenfield+papyrus&page=1.



Figure 11. Detail of the Coffin of Tanakhtnettahat. Dynasty 21 (1050 BC). The Michael C. Carlos Museum. Accession Number: 1999.1.17A. From “Coffin of Tanakhtnettahat,” Emory: The Michael C. Carlos Museum, accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.carlos.emory.edu/conservation/case-studies/egyptian-ane/coffin-of-tanakhtnettahat>.



Figure 12. Inner Coffin of Henutmehyt. Thebes, Egypt. 19th Dynasty (ca. 1250 BC).
British Museum. Accession Number: EA 48001. From "Inner Coffin of Henutmehyt,"
The British Museum, accessed March 14, 2014,
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/i/inner_coffin_o
f_henutmehyt.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/i/inner_coffin_of_henutmehyt.aspx).



Figure 13. Figure of Nut with Outstretched Wings. Coffin of Henettawy. Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, Egypt. Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21 (ca. 1040-992 BC). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accession Number: 25.3.182-184. From "Coffin Set of Henettawy," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/25.3.182-184>.



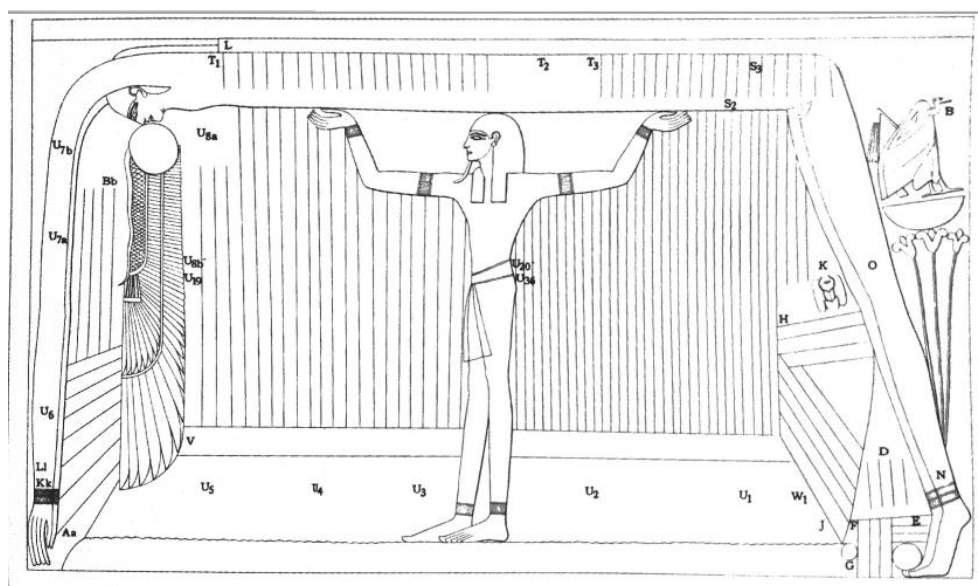
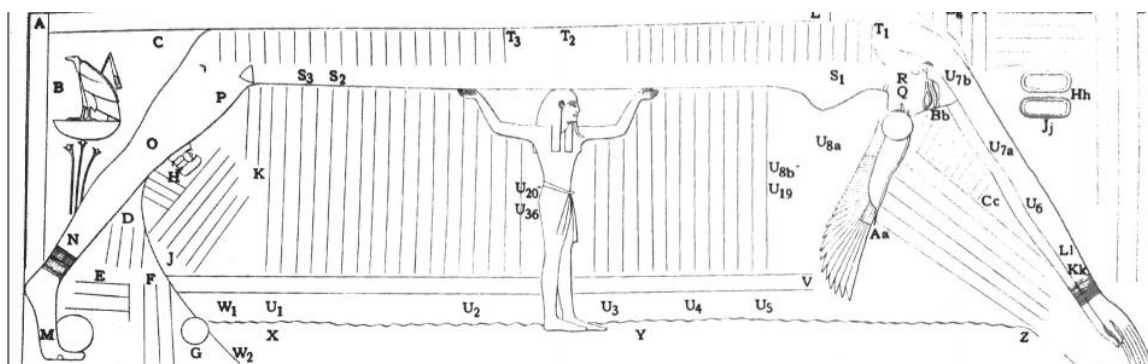
Figure 14. Figure of Nut on the Sarcophagus of Merenptah. Tanis, Egypt. 19th Dynasty. Egyptian Museum, Cairo. From National Geographic, accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.natgeocrete.com/photography/1405120>.



Figure 15. Coffin of Peftjauneith with a figure of Nut on the left, representing the night sky. Saqqara, Egypt. Late Period (ca. 650 BC). Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Accession Number: AMM 5-e. From “Coffin for the Mummy of Peftjauneith,” Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.rmo.nl/english/collection/highlights/egyptian-collection/coffin-mummy-peftjauneith>.



Figure 16. Coffin Lid of Hornedjitef. Thebes, Egypt. Ptolemaic Period. British Museum. Accession Number: EA 6678. From Nigel Strudwick, *Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2006), 294.



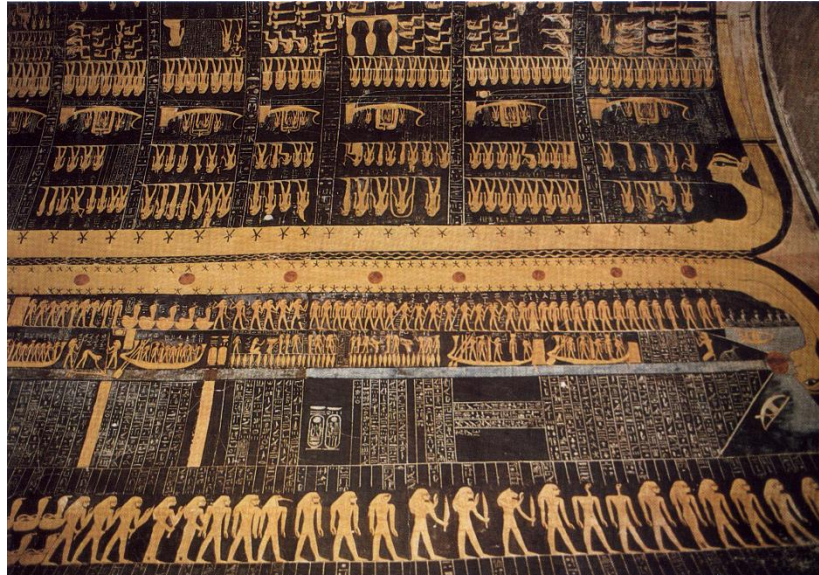


Figure 19. Book of the Day and Book of the Night. Ceiling of Ramesses VI. KV 9, Valley of the Kings, Thebes, Egypt. 20th Dynasty. From Erik Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings: Horizon of Eternity* (New York: Timken Publishers, 1990), 100. I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Podzorski for this image scan.



Figure 20. Weighing of the Heart Ceremony from The Singer of Amun Nany's Funerary Papyrus. Tomb of Meritamun (TT 538), Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, Egypt. Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21 (ca. 1050 BC). Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accession Number: 30.3.31. From "The Singer of Amun Nany's Funerary Papyrus." The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/548344>.



Figure 23. Circular Ceiling of Dendera with Zodiac. Osiris Chapel, Temple of Hathor, Dendera. The Louvre Museum. Accession Number: D 38. From “Le Zodiaque de Dendéra.” The Louvre Museum, accessed April 8, 2014, http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=19044.

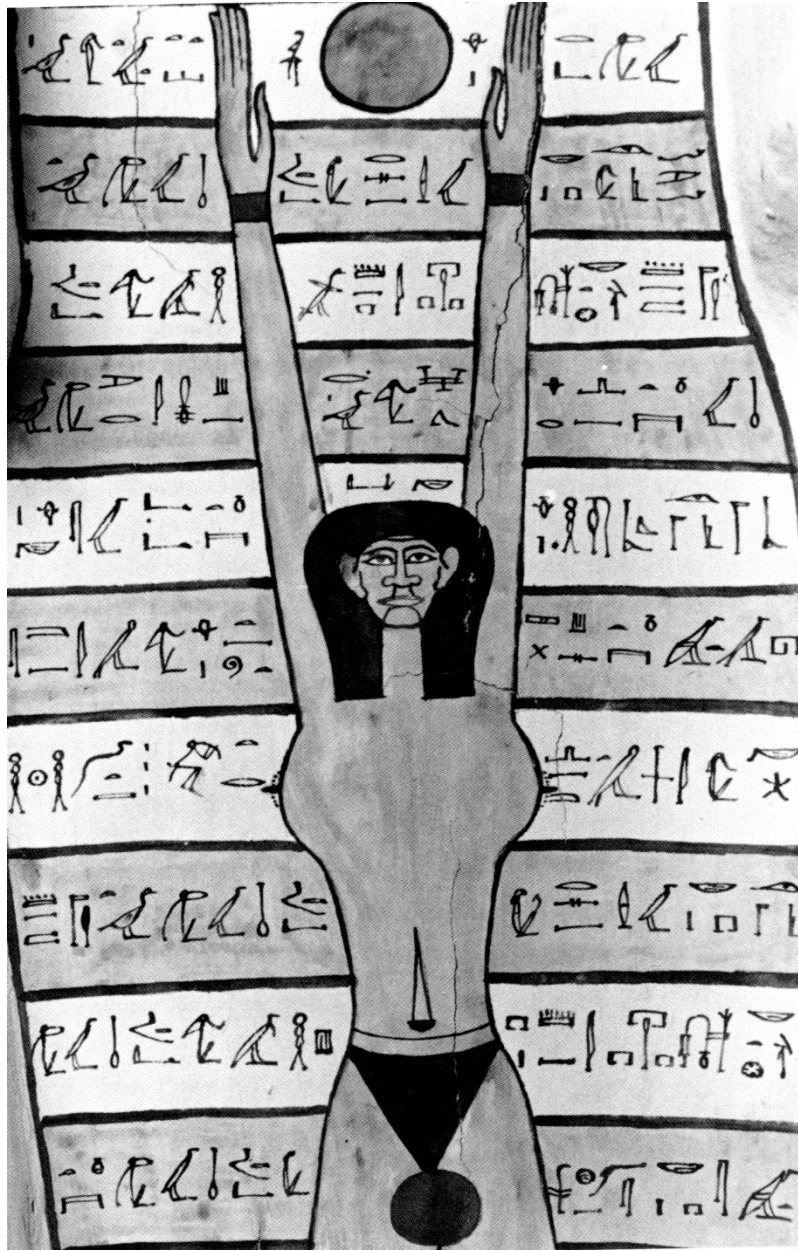


Figure 24. Coffin lid of Wedjarenes with *spd* hieroglyph. Deir el-Bahari, Thebes, Egypt.
Late Period, Saite, Dynasty 26 (664-525 BC). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Accession Number: O.C.22a, b. From Erik Hornung, *Idea into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought* (Timken, 1992), 190.